A comprehensive exploration of Islamic studies and Shi'i Thought

AL-IFTITAH SUPPLICATION

Unveiling Its Spiritual Depths and Practical Applications

Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Husayni Tihrani

Translation and annotations: Sayyid Muhammad Muhsin Husayni Tihrani

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Allamah Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Husayni Tihrani

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قد جاء فی الأحادیث القدسیّة؛ أنّ الله جلّ جلاله یقول: عبدی! خلقتُ الأشیاءَ لأجلک و خلقتُکَ لأجلی، وهبتُکَ الدّنیا بالإحسان و الآخرةَ بالإیمان.

In the Holy Hadith, Allah, the Exalted, says: My servant, I created the universe for your sake and made you for My sake. I have bestowed upon you the world out of My grace and generosity and the Hereafter out of your faith. (Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī asrār Amīr al-Mu'minīn, p. 283)

Arabic Letters

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	'	م	m
ب	b	ن	n
ت	t	و	w
ث	th	ه	h
ج	j	ي	y
ح	ḥ	ة	ah; at
خ	kh	ى	á
د	d		
ذ	dh	Long Vowels	
ر	r	ا	ā
ز	z	و	ū
س	s	ي	ī
ش	sh		
ص	ṣ	Short Vowels	
ض	ḍ	ـَ	a
ط	ṭ	ـُ	u
ظ	ẓ	ـِ	i
ع	‘		
غ	gh	Persian Letters	
ف	f	پ	P
ق	q	چ	Ch
ك	k	ژ	Zh
ل	l	گ	G

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بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم. لله الحمد و له الشّكر، و الصّلاة علىٰ أفضل البريّة و خير خلق الله أجمعين محمّد و آله الطّاهرين، و لعنة الله علىٰ أعدائهم إلىٰ يوم الدّين.

In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful. All praise is due to God, and all thanks are to Him. Prayers and peace be upon the best of God's creation, Muhammad, and his pure family. May God's curse be upon their enemies until Judgment Day.

One of the prayers recited during Ramadan and on other occasions is the Dua al-Iftitah (al-Iftitāḥ supplication). It is one of the few prayers that awakens the spirit and longing of the human soul to perceive the Imamate, both outwardly and inwardly. It prepares the human being to sense the presence of the Grand Wilayah, His Eminence, Baqīyyat Allāh, the Mahdī (may God hasten his reappearance, and may our souls be sacrificed for his footsteps).

Numerous supplications, including the Ziyarat Jamiah Kabirah and the Dua al-Nudbah, emphasize the central axis of the universe as the wilayah (guardianship) of the Imams. These prayers captivate the reader's attention on this axis and elaborate on the essence of the connection between the Creator and the created, specifically the Ḥablillāh al-Matīn (God's strong rope), or in other words, the Imām al-Mubīn (the revealing Imam). In this regard, they possess distinct characteristics compared to other supplications. However, the Dua al-Iftitah, in a groundbreaking manner, clarifies the position and status of the servant before God and outlines the methodology for establishing a profound connection with the Divine. Subsequently, it unveils to the reader the means of this connection, stressing that no alternative path exists to attain the Divine realm. Thus, apart from the Imams' visitations, whose names are commemorated in the ziyaratnamas, no supplication explicitly mentions all the names of the fourteen infallible in this distinctive fashion. This is a point that warrants profound contemplation.[1]

Dua al-Iftitah is distinguished by its profound and insightful phrases, which have captivated the minds of learned individuals. It is rare to find a scholar who has not incorporated its gems into their discourses, writings, and various endeavors. Consequently, this supplication has garnered widespread acclaim among esteemed scholars, particularly divine saints. The expressions addressed to His Eminence Mahdī (may God hasten his reappearance) hold particular prominence within the Dua al-Iftitah, a feature less commonly encountered in other supplications. Consequently, this prayer can be regarded as a transformative instrument for fostering closeness and connection with the rightful authority holder. It was composed specifically for this purpose by the infallible, and it serves as an unwavering beacon of guidance and lifeline for both the period of occultation and the time of Ṣāḥib al-Zamān, the Mahdī's emergence.

The renowned scholar Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Husayni Tihrani, known for his profound wisdom and piety, held the Dua al-Iftitah in immense reverence throughout his illustrious life. He frequently incorporated its verses into his discourses and writings, highlighting its profound significance. Even during his collaborative endeavors with the revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, he beautifully and elegantly published this supplication's verses as a declaration on the auspicious night marking the birth of His Eminence al-Qā'im al-Muntaẓar al-Mahdī (may God hasten his reappearance).

اللّهمّ إنّا نرغبُ إليک فی دولةٍ كريمةٍ تُعزّ بها الإسلامَ و أهلَه و تُذلّ بها النّفاقَ و أهلَه! و تجعلَنا فيها من الدّعاة إلىٰ طاعتک و القادة إلىٰ سبيلک، و ترزقَنا بها كرامةَ الدّنيا و الآخرة!

The announcement of this issue, especially at that time, was nothing but a declaration of the transformation of the tyrannical government into a safe and just government under the domination and hegemony of His Eminence, the Mahdī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (may our souls be sacrificed for him).

The late engineer Mahdī Bāzargān (may God have mercy on him) said in a speech: In a time when no sound or cry is heard from any of the religious centers, mosques, or Husseiniyas,[2] only from the Qaim Mosque did this cry come: O God, we long for You in a glorious state.

اَللّهمّ إنّا نَرغَبُ إلیک فی دَولَةٍ کَریمة.

During the Ramadan nights at the Qaim Mosque, my esteemed father meticulously recited the Dua al-Iftitah, often followed by insightful explanations. Regrettably, no tangible remnants of those profound discourses, whether written or audio, have survived the test of time. Fortunately, during one of those years, I was able to document some of my father's insights. Although incomplete, these records are a valuable testament to his extensive knowledge and deep spiritual understanding.[3]

All praise and gratitude are due to God alone. The grace of compiling and editing these statements has been bestowed upon several dear friends and companions, and the collection that now lies before you is the culmination of their efforts. May God amplify their success in disseminating and upholding the pristine faith, and may He grace us with the privilege of being among the followers and pilgrims on the path and way of His saints ('Awliyā'Allāh or those vested with the authority of Allah) in the name of Muhammad and his family.

Sayyid Muhammad Muhsin Husayni Tihrani,
27 Rabi' al-Thani 1435 AH, The Holy City of Qum.

Session One

أعوذُ بِالله من الشَّيطان الرَّجيم
بسم الله الرَّحمن الرَّحيم
و صلَّى الله علىٰ محمَّدٍ و آله الطَّاهرين
و لعنةُ الله علىٰ أعدائهم أجمعين من الآنَ إلىٰ قيامِ يوم الدِّين.

I seek refuge in Allah from the cursed Satan.
In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the Most Merciful.
Peace be upon Muhammad and his pure family.
May Allah's curse be upon all their enemies until Judgment Day.

If God, The Exalted, permits, we will explain the Dua al-Iftitah during the blessed nights of Ramadan, followed by the Dua of Abu Hamza al-Thumali.[4] However, delving too deeply into the nuances of interpretation and engaging in lengthy discussions could extend the process beyond our intended scope. Thus, our explanations will be simplified and concise, minimizing linguistic analysis and focusing on the overall message conveyed by these profound supplications. We aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of these rich and spiritually enriching prayers, allowing the seeker to grasp their essence promptly.

The meaning of praise and gratitude

بسم الله الرَّحمن الرَّحيم.
اَللَّهمَّ إنّي أفتَتِحُ الثَّناءَ بِحمدِك.

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
O God, I begin glorifying You with Your praise.

Ḥamd(حمد) means to praise and glorify. I praise Your infinite wisdom, boundless blessings, and profound attributes. I praise You for the challenges I overcame and the guidance I received throughout my journey. I praise Your esteemed Prophet and the revered Imams.

The dependence of praise and glorification of others on the praise and glorification of God

My every act of praise begins with You. To You, I offer my first and foremost expressions of reverence, for without acknowledging Your divine nature, all other praise rings hollow. Even when I seek to commend another being, that commendation rests upon recognizing and honoring Your glory. You embody beauty, and every expression of goodness, purity, and blessing flows from You. All other beauty is but a reflection of Your own, and all perfection a mere glimpse of Your infinite excellence. Therefore, I find any praise that does not contribute to recognizing Your greatness to be devoid of true meaning. Oh God, only when praise is woven into the tapestry of Your glory does it take on true significance. Hence, in this prayer, I primarily raise my voice in praise and acknowledgment of You.

The origin of all right and steadfast things in the guidance and favor of God

و أنتَ مُسَدِّدٌ لِلصَّوابِ بِمَنِّك.

And You guide the right way with Your grace.

Tasdīd means to make something firm or stable, and Musaddid (مُسَدِّدٌ) means consolidated or strengthened. The act of praise I undertake is not simply a personal desire but rather a fundamental right and a virtuous act. I direct this gratitude to You, the ultimate source of all assistance. You solidify and strengthen all that is good and unwavering, and the very essence of steadfastness relies solely upon Your reinforcement. This signifies that all existence and all stability within the universe stem from Your divine guidance and grace. It is through Your benevolence that righteous deeds are solidified.

The difference between the occurrence of divine forgiveness and mercy and the occurrence of divine punishment

مَنّ: لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ.

Indeed, God has favored the believers by sending a messenger from themselves among them. (Quran 3:164)

"مَنّ" means mercy and favor without a reward. Every positive action we take and every virtuous element within the universe rests upon and draws strength from a fundamental principle that transcends the anticipation of any reciprocal benefit. This notion manifests through the inherent bestowal of good upon the universe, solidifying all righteous and enduring phenomena within it.

و أَيْقَنْتُ أَنَّكَ أَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ فِي مَوْضِعِ الْعَفْوِ وَ الرَّحْمَةِ.

My understanding of your nature has deepened, leading me to believe that you embody the ultimate expression of mercy, especially when forgiving is warranted.

و أَشَدُّ الْمُعَاقِبِينَ فِي مَوْضِعِ النَّكَالِ وَ النَّقِمَةِ.

You are the most severe of all punishers in the place of punishment, misfortune, and misery. Within the framework of consequences and retribution, your authority is paramount.

و أَعْظَمُ الْمُتَجَبِّرِينَ فِي مَوْضِعِ الْكِبْرِيَاءِ وَ الْعَظَمَةِ.

In the place where it is fitting for the Lord, the Great, and the Exalted, You are more significant than all, and You manifest Your majesty and greatness.

The question of why God punishes the unbelievers

A profound query arises, "Why does the Exalted God, the embodiment of boundless compassion, subject the disbelievers to punishment?" Those who openly defy His decrees and those who err through ignorance deserve forgiveness. So, why did the Most Merciful God create Hell and subject individuals to its torment? It is a question that demands contemplation and reflection.

A theological explanation for this query exists, but let us postpone delving into its depths for now. Instead, consider a more straightforward approach. Suppose an individual seeks to comprehend God's actions and contrast them with their own, as they lack any path to the divine beyond their inherent qualities and instincts. In that case, they will observe that, in certain instances, those who interact with them exhibit behaviors that warrant forgiveness and mercy.

The individual may have transgressed moral boundaries or appropriated another's belongings, but upon remorseful introspection, they may seek forgiveness by saying: I pilfered your funds; please grant me absolution. I engaged in slanderous conduct behind your back; I implore you to forgive me. I perpetrated an injustice upon you; I beseech your pardon. If the aggrieved individual engages in self-reflection, they will recognize the moment for clemency. Since this individual of faith committed an act of transgression due to ignorance and a lack of comprehension, and now they exhibit genuine repentance, the appropriate course of action is to offer forgiveness.

The extensive corpus of hadiths devoted to forgiveness, compassion, and forbearance underscores their profound significance and the manifold rewards they bring.[5] This instance serves as a testament to their transformative power.

Punishment is warranted when an individual has violated another's property, honor, or virtue, demonstrating no remorse or inclination toward repentance. They continue to show no remorse for their wrongdoing, and their pride prevents them from acknowledging the seriousness of their actions. These individuals lack remorse or regret. Instead, they approach the victim with a sense of entitlement, driven by a desire to consolidate their power and repeat their offense with increased audacity, targeting either the original victim or others. When an individual seeks guidance from their inner compass, it often resonates with the sentiment: One must punish this individual; it would be unjust to let them go unpunished, for within the depths of their soul, a spark of darkness and fire smolders, consuming them and casting a shadow over their entire being. A consequence for their actions could serve as a significant deterrent, reminding them of

the potential impact of their behavior and promoting adherence to established standards. When someone expresses disdain without remorse, is responding in kind the appropriate course of action? Sympathy is not always the most effective course of action. Thus, the Quran proclaims:

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

And for you in retribution is life, O you of understanding, that you may become righteous. (Quran 2:17

This passage underlines the fundamental tenet that a society with the principle of retribution safeguards its enduring existence. When individuals are granted impunity to commit transgressions without fear of consequence, a cycle of lawlessness perpetuates itself. This is rooted in the inherent inclination towards transgression within human nature.

With a punitive deterrent, a significant portion of the population will likely refrain from violating established rules. Furthermore, the potential for retribution can serve as a deterrent to criminal activity. The understanding that transgressions will incur proportional consequences discourages individuals from engaging in them. This principle underpins the importance of retribution as a facet of a just and well-ordered society.

Similarly, as individuals delve into their conscience, they will recognize that forgiveness and compassion are often the most befitting responses. For instance, should you retaliate with harsh words if someone inadvertently bumps into you or spills water on you and then earnestly apologizes? Not! Instead, you should extend a gesture of reconciliation, uttering, 'Go in peace! It was simply an error in judgment.'

However, when someone intentionally seeks to undermine your dignity and remains unyielding, you cannot grant them an unfettered license to do as they please. Therefore, it becomes evident that the most exceptional legal framework in existence is Islamic law, anchored in the bedrock of logic, wisdom, and knowledge.

In over four hundred verses, the Quran eloquently encourages individuals to pursue knowledge.[6] Nevertheless, a synergistic blend of religious propagation and retribution, boundaries, and compensation is indispensable for individuals to coexist harmoniously in societies.

Those who steal must be held accountable, those who engage in adultery must face the consequences, and those who succumb to corruption must be brought to justice. No distinction shall be made between individuals, regardless of their social standing or affluence, whether a minister or a mendicant. In the hallowed halls of Islamic jurisprudence, all stand equal.

Suppose a person of means infringes upon the rights of a less fortunate individual. In that case, the aggrieved party shall seek recourse from the judge, and the judge shall summon the affluent offender and administer the prescribed punishment. The judge shall uphold the rights of the marginalized and restore their rightful due. In the eyes of justice, there shall be no distinction between high and low, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, individuals of different ethnicities, or men and women. All shall be treated with equity and fairness.

If a respected scholar misappropriates another's property or damages their reputation, the injured party would be compelled to seek legal recourse through the judicial system. Despite the scholar's esteemed position and perceived righteousness, they are treated with impartiality and brought before the judge for due process. This unwavering adherence to justice is the hallmark of Islamic law. The scholar's relationship with God remains sacrosanct, but it does not grant them the impunity to transgress against the rights of others.

The generous behavior of Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) in the death of his son

One day, while attending to guests, Imam Sajjad's (peace be upon him) servant accidentally dropped a food tray in the kitchen. The tray struck the head of Imam Sajjad's young son, tragically resulting in the child's immediate death. Overwhelmed with grief, the servant began to cry uncontrollably.

Hearing the commotion, Imam Sajjad emerged to find the troubled servant. Recognizing the servant's immense sorrow, Imam Sajjad, in an act of great compassion, declared, "I set you free in the name of God." Shocked by this unexpected mercy, the servant departed.

Several days later, the servant returned to Imam Sajjad. Deeply remorseful, the servant acknowledged his grave error and expressed his understanding of any potential punishment. He implored Imam Sajjad, "If my presence is unbearable, please sell me so that you may gain something from my service."

Why did you free me? Imam Sajjad replied: By the God who created me, I did not free you because I was angry with you. I did so because I knew that as long as you were in this house, every time you saw me, you would feel remorse and shame. I did not want you to feel that way, so I freed you.[7]

This is one of the methods used by the Imams. The servant had killed Imam Sajjad's son, but it was an accident. Imam Sajjad said, "Go, you are free!"

Navigating conflicts with sinners, opponents, and non-believers: an examination of prophet Muhammad's approach

Prophet Muhammad's encounter with individuals who deliberately engaged in transgressions, whether through murder, adultery, or theft, exemplifies his steadfast commitment to compassion, justice, and societal well-being. With unwavering resolve, the Prophet endeavored to guide an individual onto the path of righteousness. As a divinely ordained messenger, he remained steadfast in his commitment to upholding the law's sacredness and safeguarding society's moral fabric. The Prophet tells him to embrace Islam.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ.[8]

Undeterred, the Prophet, acting as God's messenger, firmly denounced the man's destructive path and offered him a clear choice to embrace the righteous path or face the consequences. Yet, the man remained stubborn, clinging to his violent and harmful pursuits. Deeply concerned, the Prophet warned him of the inevitable regret that awaited him should he persist.

Despite the man's rejection, the Prophet continued his mission with unwavering resilience. He embodied an uncompromising commitment to God, demonstrating unparalleled patience, understanding, and firmness in his beliefs. With steadfast resolve, he declared: By God, even if you offered me the sun and the moon, I would not abandon my message of God's oneness. There is no other path.[9]

Despite facing such extreme opposition, including being pelted with stones and sustaining a broken foot, the Prophet maintains his composure, stating, "These acts are merely personal attacks against me and hold no significance." His expulsion from Mecca and the subsequent humiliation of having a stomach flung onto their head during prostration further demonstrate the depth of his suffering.

Amr ibn al-As, a minister of Mu'awiya, once reached the pinnacle of debasement by placing the placenta of a camel, a symbol of utter filth and impurity, upon the Prophet's head. At the same time, he was engaged in prayer within the sacred confines of the Kaaba.[10] Yet, the Prophet, with his unwavering faith, entrusted these transgressions to God, refusing to let them consume his spirit. This was not merely a personal feud; it was a heinous crime fueled by unadulterated hatred.

Early in his mission, the Prophet Muhammad faced opposition and persecution in Mecca. He sought refuge in Taif but ultimately returned to Mecca, where the opposition continued. He and his followers eventually migrated to Medina, where the enemy started mobilizing an army to destroy all the Muslims and the Prophet.

The right to self-defense is an essential element of human existence. To deny oneself this right is to renounce one's humanity itself. What distinguishes a human being from an inanimate object is the capacity for self-preservation and the agency to defend oneself and others. Therefore, the wars that the Prophet Muhammad fought were primarily defensive. Defense of chastity and personality is a human obligation, and the aggressor must be suppressed. There is no other way. That is why we have in the Holy Quran:

وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِبِّيُّونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ.

Numerous prophets fought alongside their companions -- a band of righteous men. They remained steadfast, unyielding to adversity, for Allah cherishes those who demonstrate patience in the face of trials. (Quran 3:146)

The necessity of having two aspects of mercy and wrath in individual and social life

All prophets engaged in wars, wielding the sword to safeguard human life. Yet, they simultaneously embodied the essence of God's boundless mercy. In our personal and societal spheres, we recognize that the world operates under the dual principles of compassion and firmness. The harmonious balance of these two forces ensures humanity's well-being.

Compassion demands that one provide a child with treats and indulge their whims, yet the same compassion mandates that one disciplines the child when necessary. If one fails to administer discipline when it is due, it is a transgression against that child! The undisciplined child becomes indulged and spoiled, and within the blink of an eye, they reach the age of fifteen, engaging in inappropriate behaviors. The parents' voices rise in protest while this unfortunate child remains oblivious that they have brought these misfortunes upon themselves.

If a toddler exhibits undesirable behavior, one should gently discourage them by saying, "Dear child, this is not a proper action; refrain from it." This intervention may suffice to deter further misconduct. However, if the child persists, the guidance should become more assertive. If the behavior continues a third time, a gentle pinch on the ear – not two hard slaps or kicks – may effectively dissuade the child from repeating the transgression. Nonetheless, if the father fails to address the child's misbehavior out of misguided affection, he unwittingly paves the way for a life of wrongdoing.

The father who disciplines his children is not their adversary; instead, he possesses unparalleled compassion for their well-being. This compassion compels him to discipline his child, even though it causes him more significant distress than the child himself. But there is no alternative; he must do this for the child's ultimate happiness. This is the essence of genuine compassion.

Material indulgences like sweets do not solely define mercy. True mercy lies in providing guidance and discipline, shaping a child's trajectory toward righteousness. It encompasses fostering a love for education, instilling Islamic values, and nurturing impeccable manners. It entails gently nudging children towards prayer, even at young ages when it is not obligatory. A parent who allows a child to slumber, neglecting their spiritual obligations, is not demonstrating mercy. They are failing to prepare their offspring for the rigors of life and the hereafter.

Imam Riḍā (peace be upon him) said, "Woe to you! Your child is eight years old and does not pray. The man said, "Why is that a problem? He is still a child". Imam Riḍā said, "When the child reaches the age of sixteen, he will not pray." Why? The child's failure to pray at age eight stems from a lack of discipline instilled during their formative years. If the father diligently awakens the child for prayer, the child will develop a steadfast habit of prayer that will carry into adulthood. This habitual practice will likely lead to continuing prayer as it becomes fully integrated into their daily routine. Therefore, disciplining the child this way is a form of compassion, ensuring their spiritual well-being.

Mercy in two forms: Nurturing love and firm guidance

Mercy manifests in two distinct forms: Tender affection and unwavering direction. When a child falls ill, how does one extend mercy? It is by locking up the pantry to prevent the consumption of sweets, fruits, and wholesome meals. We warm milk or prepare a simple, unsalted broth for the ailing child. Traditionally, a nourishing gruel was served. Are these actions not acts of mercy?

A child might contemplate, "What an oppressive father or cruel mother I have! They hover over me, forcing me to consume gruel." Yet, today, when a child falls ill, we rush them to the hospital. The doctor mandates immediate surgery, declaring, "There's no alternative: the appendix must be removed, or it will rupture and claim the child's life!" We entrust the child's care to the surgeon's hands, undergoing the procedure swiftly. The child might question, "Why are they inflicting pain and subjecting me to this procedure? This is mercy! If a parent hesitates to carry out this crucial act, have they not committed a grave transgression?

Thus, mercy unfolds in two aspects: 1. Nurturing love, providing sustenance, fostering

affection, and radiating smiles. 2. Discipline administering discipline, administering a medicine that may taste unpleasant, prescribing gruel, performing surgery, and eradicating the source of corruption. The realm of divine proximity operates under the same principle.

If a black sore erupts on an individual's body, immediate medical attention is required to remove it. Delay would allow the sore to engulf the entire body, leading to death within hours. The patient should not protest for amputating the finger because it harbors the black sore and must be severed. If left untreated, it will destroy the entire body.

The enduring flow of God's infinite mercy: Absolving the errant while punishing the defiant

Humankind engages in a multitude of transgressions and offenses. These transgressions can be classified into Sins born of ignorance, misunderstanding, and sins rooted in arrogance and stubbornness. Many sexual sins fall under the first category, often committed due to a lack of knowledge and comprehension. Similarly, an individual may steal the property of another out of ignorance and misunderstanding, only to regret their actions later and return the property or offer an apology. This remorseful act signifies repentance, and God is willing to forgive. If God were to withhold forgiveness, who would qualify for paradise? Who has never sinned?

Sins rooted in arrogance and stubbornness are far more severe and demand more significant effort to repent for. However, even these sins can be pardoned if the sinner genuinely repents and turns to God wholeheartedly.

God's boundless mercy extends so far that when individuals are called to repentance, they often turn a deaf ear. God declares, "During the holy month of Ramadan, whoever repents, God will accept their repentance." Yet, people return to their transgressions.

God proclaims, "Whoever stands in the plain of Arafat on the ninth day of Dhul-Ḥijjah is akin to a newborn infant. The angels approach them, saying, 'O man! Reignite your deeds anew! Your sins have been absolved."[11] Yet, who believes this proclamation? They ask, "God, are you telling me I am forgiven"?

From dusk to dawn on Friday nights, the gates of paradise stand ajar. Angels descend and ceaselessly invite people to paradise in groups.[12] Individuals flock to the mosque on Friday nights, engage in the Night Prayer, and weep with remorse. When they are told, "You are forgiven," they express disbelief, "Am I forgiven?". Their lack of faith stems from their inability to comprehend God's mercy. They gaze into their hardened hearts and question, "How can God take me to paradise?" He will forgive everyone.

Purification through the fiery trial of hell

The persistence of sinners in their transgression and unwavering resolve to defy the path of righteousness demand divine intervention. Just as a shepherd's intervention is crucial to protecting the flock from a ravenous wolf, God's discipline, represented by the fires of hell, cleanses the soul of its impurities.

ترحم بر پلنگ تیز دندان   ستم کاری بود بر گوسفندان.[13]

To exemplify this concept, imagine a wolf infiltrating a sheepfold, ruthlessly strangling its unsuspecting inhabitants. Would it be prudent for the shepherd to offer the wolf sustenance while the sheep are being devoured? Of course not; this would only encourage the predator to continue its destructive rampage.

وَ أَشَدُّ الْمُعَاقِبِينَ فِي مَوْضِعِ النَّكَالِ وَ النَّقِمَةِ.

The divine attributes of beauty and majesty: a contemplation of God's essence

وَ أَشَدُّ الْمُعَاقِبِينَ

And He is the most severe of punishers.

God, the Supreme Being, encompasses two fundamental attributes: Beauty and majesty. Beauty beckons with an invitation, "Come!" while majesty commands, "Retreat!" It is a divine warning, a safeguard against contamination incompatible with God's supreme splendor. Whoever is incompatible, the rays of beauty strike him and say, "Stand in your place; you have no right to enter!" This means punishment, damnation, and warning. If it were not so, everyone would want

to enter the sanctuary of fanā (annihilation) and the sanctuary of the divine essence. One cannot imagine God opening the door and inviting those who have committed countless sins and accumulated immense impurities into His essence. Such an act would be utterly impossible! Assuming this was the case, Abu Sufyan would share the same ultimate destiny as Amir al-Mu'minin and Salman, the Persian.

Just as a beekeeper removes a diseased bee from the hive to preserve the integrity of its inhabitants, God's majesty ensures that only those who embody His beauty and align with His divine nature are granted access to His sanctuary. If this were not the case, all would clamor for entry, including those tainted by countless transgressions and impurities.

Since God embodies beauty and majesty, the anger and mercy we witness in the world stem from these two divine attributes. Similarly, the instincts we observe within ourselves reflect these fundamental aspects of God's nature.[14]

و أشدُّ المعاقبين في موضع النكال و النقمة.

And the most severe punisher in the place of punishment and vengeance.

In business dealings, if someone treats you with leniency, you reciprocate with similar kindness. If someone approaches you with harshness, you mirror their rigidity. If someone attempts to exploit your trust, you become vigilant to safeguard your interests. But if someone demonstrates honesty and integrity, you are accommodating, even to the extent of saying, 'Let them keep an extra dollar.' God's conduct mirrors this principle. God reciprocates with profound attentiveness and guidance if someone approaches Him with reverence and care. If someone engages in spiritual matters with an easygoing attitude, God responds with similar ease, extending His blessings in abundance.[15]

و أعظمُ المتجبّرين في موضع الكبرياء و العظمة.

God is more noble and dearer than all tyrants (that is, oppressors, masters, sultans, those who have dignity and honor) in a place where someone shows arrogance in front of him; He is the master and does not let them in.

Yet, when one humbles oneself and proclaims, "Oh, God, You are the First and the Last, the Most High and the Most Exalted, and all beings are in Your control, while I am but a mortal servant," God inquires, "Are you a mortal servant?" He replies, "Yes!" God responds, "Approach"!

أعظمُ المتجبّرين.

I am the Most Exalted of the Exalted in the realm of majesty and glory, not in the domain of humbleness and poverty; venture into My sanctuary! It is adorned for you, every houri and youth I have fashioned for you, gardens with rivers flowing beneath them.

جنّات□ تجري من تحتها الأنهار.[16]

They are all yours. I created this realm of existence solely for you, not for Myself. I am self-sufficient from My manifestations; this is for you.[17]

The Mathnawī narrates a captivating tale of artistic rivalry between the renowned Chinese and Roman schools of painting. The Chinese, with their millennia-old tradition and esteemed painting academies, were widely recognized for their creative prowess, their exquisite paintings captivating audiences worldwide. The Roman tradition of painting, equally respected and celebrated, stood as a testament to their artistic mastery.

The Chinese and Roman artisans gathered in a designated space. One wall was assigned to the Chinese, and the adjacent wall was entrusted to the Roman masters. They were given free rein to unleash their artistic prowess and tasked with adorning their respective walls with their distinctive styles and techniques.

To ensure the integrity of the competition, a curtain was instituted between the two walls, concealing each painter's work from their counterpart. This veil of anonymity remained in place for an extended period, spanning forty days, fifty days, or even two months, until the painters concluded their masterpieces. Only then was the curtain lifted, revealing the fruits of their labor.

The esteemed sultan and his council of elders gathered to scrutinize the paintings, tasked with discerning which school of artistry had emerged victorious.

The Chinese artisans began to painstakingly depict a kaleidoscope of exquisite landscapes, rendering trees in their vibrant foliage, capturing the mesmerizing interplay of sunlight and shadow, and masterfully depicting the meandering curves of rivers, towering mountains, and graceful birds taking flight. With the utmost precision and attention to detail, they infused their paintings with the vibrant hues of their imagination, transforming the canvas into a symphony of color and form.

While the Chinese painters were immersed in creating their elaborate landscapes, the Roman artisans embarked on a meticulous surface preparation process. They painstakingly polished the wall with increasingly finer abrasives, starting with coarse sandpaper and gradually transitioning to finer grits, akin to polishing an iron object until it gleamed like a mirror. This meticulous attention to detail transformed the raw wall into a surface capable of capturing the most subtle nuances of light and shadow, setting the stage for a truly remarkable painting.

When the curtain was finally drawn back, their efforts were rewarded with a revelation: their meticulously prepared surface now served as an ideal canvas to shine with unparalleled brilliance. The Roman strategy, passive and uneventful, had secured their victory, demonstrating the profound power of preparation and the transformative impact of careful groundwork.[18]

The heart is purified through humility and submission

Servants of God approach God and say: We possess nothing as we are poor and subservient. You requested this act of ours, and we performed it to the best of our ability, but we cannot claim any credit for it. We acknowledge that you are the Master, and we are Your servants. You are the Ruler, and we are Your slaves.

This is the essence of acknowledging servitude to God and the process of purifying the heart. When this happens, God declares: Now that you have humbled yourselves before My greatness, I shall grant you everything I possess. You did not stand in opposition to My pride, nor did you raise a shield against Me. I do not engage in battle with the unshielded nor exact tribute from them. You have purified your heart, and now all of My lights, names, and attributes are manifest within you. Gaze into the depths of your heart and observe!

God is the Most Magnificent, but in what context? It is in the realm of glory and greatness. O God, now that I am confident that You are the Most Compassionate of the Compassionate in the domain of forgiveness and mercy, the Most Severe of the Punishers in the realm of punishment and retribution, and the Most Magnificent in the arena of magnificence, and that these attributes reside within You, I make a humble request: Grant me an audience with You. I desire to converse with You, ensuring that You will not claim I did not seek this audience on the Day of Judgment. I am addressing You, O God. Behold! I have two witnesses who will testify on the Day of Judgment.

We, too, O God, express our unwavering certainty in Your attributes. Now that we have done so, listen to our prayers. We pray to You throughout this supplication.

اللّهم صلّ على محمّد و آل محمّد.

O God, bestow Your blessings upon Muhammad and the household of Muhammad.

Session Two

أعوذُ بِاللهِ من الشَّيطان الرَّجيم
بِسمِ اللهِ الرَّحمنِ الرَّحيم
و صلَّى اللهُ علىٰ محمَّدٍ و آلهِ الطَّاهرين
و لعنةُ اللهِ علىٰ أعدائهم أجمعين من الآنَ إلىٰ قيامِ يومِ الدِّين.

I seek refuge in Allah from the cursed Satan.
In the Name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the Most Merciful.
Peace be upon Muhammad and his pure family.
May Allah's curse be upon all their enemies until Judgment Day.

اللهمَّ إنّي أفتَتِحُ الثَّناءَ بِحَمدِكَ، و أنتَ مُسَدِّدٌ لِلصَّوابِ بِمَنِّكَ، و أيقَنتُ أنَّكَ أنتَ أرحَمُ الرَّاحِمينَ في مَوضِعِ العَفوِ و الرَّحمةِ، و أشَدُّ المُعاقِبينَ في مَوضِعِ النَّكالِ و النَّقِمةِ، و أعظَمُ المُتَجَبِّرينَ في مَوضِعِ الكِبرِياءِ و العَظَمةِ.

O God, I commence my adoration by praising You, for You are the One who guides humanity towards the righteous path through Your benevolence. I am firmly convinced that You are the Most Compassionate of the Compassionate in the realm of forgiveness and mercy—in pardoning, overlooking, sparing, and concealing. In the sphere of Your bestowals and generosity, Your mercy reigns supreme, surpassing the compassion of any other being and commanding the highest esteem. However, in the domain of chastisement and retribution and the realm of anger and wrath, You dispense not mercy but rather punishment, and Your punishment is exceptionally severe. The grandeur of Your being remains unmarred, and Your essence is impervious to cracks or fissures. Those who dare to challenge Your Majesty are swiftly brought low, and their pride is humbled before Your towering presence.

Intellectual impropriety of mercy and compassion in the position of punishment and retribution

أيقَنتُ أنَّكَ أنتَ أرحَمُ الرَّاحِمين.

I have believed that You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful. This sentence is nominal, which is used for emphasis. The word "أنَّ" (that) is also for emphasis. The pronoun "أنتَ" (You) comes after the accusative case of the letter "كَ" (You), which is the subject of the word"أنَّ" . This is also for emphasis! Therefore, the point here is very highlighted. It is stated with several confirmations that My unwavering faith is firmly grounded in this very principle: Where compassion and forgiveness are warranted, You, my Lord, are undoubtedly the Most Compassionate of the Compassionate, and where retribution is merited, You are the Most Severe of the Retributors.

Humans have been granted a minuscule portion of God's knowledge and wisdom, a mere drop from the vast oceans of His understanding. Even this analogy falls short of capturing the true extent of God's knowledge and insight. We, too, can extend mercy where it is due, meet out punishment when warranted, and strike back against those who challenge our dignity and greatness. This is a reflection of the boundless majesty and grandeur of God Himself.

If we inflict punishment where mercy is required, such an action is unjust, utterly foolish, and irrational. All wise individuals would condemn such behavior. For instance, if a person's mother is ill and asks for water at night, the compassionate and sensible response would be to rise and fetch the water immediately. Ideally, the water should be readily available beside the mother's bed, allowing the person to respond swiftly to her request.[19] This is a situation that calls for mercy, not punishment.

To punish the mother by slapping her, cursing her, or shouting at her for disturbing your sleep would be egregious and unacceptable. Such conduct is cruel, illogical, and indicative of a severely flawed character. Our intellect tells us that such an act is wrong and reprehensible.

Displaying compassion in situations that call for justice can make us appear foolish. For instance, onlookers will perceive us as eccentric if we laugh at a thief attempting to invade our privacy.

The necessity of arrogance and pride in the face of a proud man

When an arrogant individual confronts another with superiority and selfishness, the latter should not succumb to humility and prostrate themselves before them. Instead, they must assert their inherent dignity and declare: No, I stand higher than you. Who are you to question my worth?

مَنْ تَوَاضَعَ لِغَنِيٍّ لِغِنَاهُ، فَقَدْ كَفَرَ.[20]

Anyone who humbles themselves before an affluent individual solely due to their wealth is not practicing true humility but rather engaging in disbelief. In such situations, it is imperative to maintain one's self-respect and assert inherent worth in the face of the arrogant individual's self-aggrandizement. Never should they capitulate to the arrogant individual's self-importance. Instead, they must remain steadfast in their self-belief and integrity.

On the battlefield, when two individuals stand against each other, and one seeks to obliterate the other and defeat their existence, this implies that they both approach the conflict with their inflated sense of self-importance. The one who aims to destroy harbors pride in their strength and determination, while the one who faces them also holds a deep-seated belief in their superiority. These two individuals represent the epitome of arrogance in each other's presence.

He proclaims, 'My dignity, my position, my worth, and so forth, and you should not even be considered a blip on the timeline of existence. With a single stroke of my sword, I shall reduce you to dust!' This, too, is a manifestation of the same arrogance.

While individuals who adhere to disbelief or polytheism and express egotism based on their beliefs are undeniably wrong, believers who express arrogance grounded in their faith are, in fact, correct. The underlying principle of arrogance, self-centeredness, and independence is a commendable quality, not a condemnable one, but it must be exercised judiciously.

When Imam Ali (peace be upon him) entered the battlefield, he would proclaim, "I am such and such! Who dares to challenge me?

أنا الّذي سَمّتني أُمّي حَيدَرَة ۝ كَلَيثِ غاباتٍ كَريهِ المَنظَرَة.[21]

I am the one whose mother bestowed upon me the name of Haydar, the lion of the desert. Just like a lion that dwells in the wilderness, his presence is so intimidating that no one dares to approach him. His appearance is so fearsome and repulsive that one cannot even bear to look at him.

It is said that some individuals who encounter a lion in the wilderness succumb not to the lion's physical attack but to the sheer terror instilled by its gaze. The lion's eyes, so piercing and intimidating, can induce such overwhelming fear that these individuals perish on the spot, and the sheer intensity of the encounter extinguishes their souls. Similarly, when the Imam takes up his sword, he does not approach Amr ibn Abd al-Wud, saying, 'I am the one who prostrates in humility and submission before the Lord, and I am equally humble before you.' Instead, the Imam performs prostration solely for the sake of God, not as a gesture of humility towards Amr ibn Abd al-Wud, but to reveal the magnificence and grandeur of God in this very instance.

He addressed the Imam, saying: Begone, young man! I was a companion of your father and did not wish to sully my hands with your blood. Imam Ali firmly replied: I would relish the prospect of my hands being drenched in your blood and eradicating the infidels from the face of the earth! I am [such and such].[22]

Indeed, these two positions stand in stark contrast. If the manifestation of arrogance and personality were utterly condemnable, God would not have instilled them within man. Personality, self-assuredness, gentlemanliness, self-centeredness, independence, and other qualities are innate to human beings. These qualities, such as desire and anger, are intuitive and serve a beneficial purpose.

An individual devoid of anger is not truly human. If one lacks the desire for food, they succumb to starvation, and without sexual instinct, the human race will perish. Similarly, one cannot defend one's honor or uphold one's dignity without anger.

God has gifted humanity with these instinctive qualities, including arrogance and personality, for a reason. They serve as driving forces, motivating individuals to strive for excellence and uphold their principles. However, like any innate quality, these instincts must be tempered and guided by wisdom and self-awareness to avoid becoming destructive and self-serving.

The Prophet would become so enraged that his face would turn crimson, and beads of sweat would form on his forehead. The veins in his neck would swell and pulse with fury.[23] So, should

we conclude that anger is inherently evil? However, the Prophet's anger was directed toward the right cause!

After meticulously dividing the spoils of war, ensuring fairness and equity for all, the Prophet refrained from taking a single coin for himself. Despite the meagerness of the loot, an Ansari individual dared to proclaim, "Muhammad did not administer justice in this division"! Upon hearing this accusation, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud declared, "By God, I shall bring this matter to the Prophet's attention!" He approached the Prophet and conveyed the Ansari's words. The Prophet's face, already flushed from the heat of the desert, turned even redder with anger. His voice trembled with rage as he exclaimed, "They uttered far worse slander against my brother Moses"! Reminding the Prophet of his exemplary patience, the Prophet declared, "If I do not uphold justice, then who will?"[24]

Ibn Mas'ud stated: The Prophet's emotional state became so disturbed and volatile that I deeply regretted my actions and wished I had not shared this information with him.

This individual believes that the division of spoils should be solely based on their whims and desires! The authority over these spoils lies exclusively with the Prophet. Four-fifths belong to the Muslim community upon acquiring spoils, which is responsible for their distribution, while one-fifth is solely reserved for the Prophet. The Prophet has complete discretion over this fifth and may distribute it as he sees fit.

On one occasion, the Prophet distributed one hundred camels from his share of the spoils to Abu Sufyan, one hundred camels to Mu'awiya, and one hundred camels to another individual. These individuals had recently embraced Islam, and their sincerity was still being evaluated. They were all considered to be hypocrites. Why did the Prophet give them such generous gifts? It was for the sake of the divine decree, 'And those whose hearts have been reconciled' (Quran 9:60).[25] He gave them these gifts to appease them, to prevent them from forming alliances with the infidels, and to appoint them as commanders of armies so that they could assist in destroying idolatry.

The Prophet appointed the infamous Khalid ibn al-Walid as the army commander and joined him in campaigns to destroy idols and conquer cities. Many of the leaders the Prophet chose for the army had a similar ilk.

Salman al-Farsi, Abu Dharr, and Miqdad could never be appointed army commanders .These individuals possess exceptional piety, purity, and honesty, embodying the highest ideals of moral integrity. However, toppling idols, conquering cities, and the like require a unique blend of martial prowess and strategic brilliance. Khalid ibn al-Walid, renowned for his cunning tactics, exemplified this trait during the Battle of Uhud. As the infidels retreated, pursued by the Muslims eager for spoils, Khalid anticipated the Muslims' movement. He seized the strategic mountain pass, turning the tide of the battle against the Muslims.[26]

Therefore, the Prophet strategically deployed these individuals in warfare. Without their contributions, the Muslim forces would have been severely disadvantaged. The Prophet would have been compelled to silence their criticism and opposition, hindering the progress of Islam.

If the Prophet desired the spoils of war, he would have readily taken his fifth share. Instead, he mounted the camel, placed his hand upon its hump, and gathered some camel hair in his grasp. He then proclaimed: By God, one-fifth of these spoils belong to us, but I gave them all to you. I did not take a single penny or dirham for myself. I handed all of this fifth back to you. So, what else do you object to?[27]

It is preposterous to accuse the Prophet of injustice in the distribution of war booty. They allege that he favors his kin, citing Abu Sufyan's relationship to the Prophet as evidence. They claim that Abu Sufyan receives preferential treatment as a member of the Umayyad clan, which is intricately connected to the Prophet's Hashimite clan. However, they overlook the fact that Abu Sufyan was once our enemy, a bloodthirsty and cruel adversary. Now that he has embraced Islam, they expect the Prophet to forgive his past transgressions and bestow upon him unwarranted favors. It is these expectations that lead them to accuse the Prophet of injustice.

Measuring justice in the light of the prophet's sacred presence

Furthermore, where do we derive our understanding of justice? What constitutes justice? Who declared that justice is virtuous and injustice is reprehensible? Is it not God and the Prophet who illuminate our path towards justice? If we fail to recognize the Prophet as the embodiment of justice, where else can we find it? We must measure justice with the Prophet's example, not vice versa! To judge the Prophet using our subjective notions of justice is an exercise in futility and

error. Individuals interpret justice according to their limited perspectives, often aligning it with their biases.

When an individual seeks adjudication from a judge in a matter involving a friend or adversary, if the judge rules in their favor, they express admiration, exclaiming, "What an astute and just judge!" However, if the judge rules against them, they vehemently protest, declaring, "This is an unjust and unfair decision!" This pattern of behavior is universal. Similarly, when someone approaches you seeking an opinion and asserts, "The truth favors you," you readily concur. However, if they contend, "The truth does not lie with you; it lies with your friend," you swiftly dismiss their assertion, declaring, "I must respectfully disagree; your claim is entirely erroneous"!

Human perspectives and preferences are inherently inadequate measures of justice.

Subjective thoughts or illusions do not dictate justice; it is an objective reality independent of our tastes or biases. The rightness or wrongness of an action does not depend on whether it aligns with our desires or inclinations. True justice transcends these subjective factors and upholds a universal standard of fairness and equity.

The most profound philosophy in the world is the idea that aligns with reality. A wise individual accurately describes the world around us by pointing out that this water is indeed water; there is ice within it, and its temperature is at a particular level. Moreover, they should demonstrate how this pot is situated in the direction of the qibla. From the perspective of their discussions, they should enable humanity to perceive the true nature of reality. However, if a wise individual cannot effectively engage with certain scenarios or cannot employ sound reasoning in specific matters and thus fails to expose the truth, their wisdom is incomplete. Consequently, numerous schools of thought need to be revised; their inability to accurately represent reality renders them utterly useless. The Sophists, the skeptics, and many individuals who garner followers today perpetuate this fallacy; they present a distorted and incomplete picture of the world, misleading humanity by obscuring the true nature of existence.

Religious faith is grounded in reality. The Prophet's words are not lies; his essence is justice; his perception is reality, and all realities must be measured with his scale. Yet, we claim that the Prophet and the Commander of the Faithful failed to uphold justice because it did not align with our personal preferences.

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ[28].

One of the objectives of zakat is to bestow it upon non-Muslims. Why does a person give zakat to non-Muslims? To incline their hearts towards Islam. One of the purposes of zakat is to reconcile the hearts of hypocrites, infidels, and polytheists. This is called (الْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ)[29] Which God has determined its expenses. The prophet himself is the bearer of the Qur'an and is the speaker of "إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ" (Indeed Allah enjoins justice and kindness).

The Prophet's teachings and the Islamic worldview reflect reality. Just as one cannot change the nature of cold water, the teachings of the Prophet and the principles of Shi'ism are constant and unwavering. They provide a clear and objective understanding of the world, dispelling illusions and misconceptions.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was a man whose very being was interwoven with reality and truth. Every world aspect must be measured and understood in light of his example.[30] He embodies the essence of knowledge, which, in its purest form, represents an intimate connection to reality. In contrast, ignorance signifies a disconnect from the truth. These glasses that stand before us are within our realm of knowledge. However, what lies beyond this wall remains beyond our comprehension, shrouded in ignorance.

Retribution and misfortune of people due to their ignorance

Individuals trapped in ignorance often perceive unrealities as reality and act upon these misconceptions. As a result, they are inevitably bound to be struck by the ignorance they embrace.[31]

Some individuals propagate baseless beliefs, claiming that placing objects like this glass can influence divine blessings, happiness, and mercy. They assert that altering its position will unleash misfortune, causing the sky to collapse, the earth to tremble, and the like. These claims

are utterly erroneous. Reality contradicts their assertions because nothing catastrophic occurs upon repositioning the glass.

These superstitions are widespread among our people, such as the belief that visiting the bathhouse at night will bring harm from jinn, cutting one's nails on Tuesday will cause their children to die, inviting a guest on Wednesday will bring misfortune, or entering a house on Saturday as a guest will invite bad luck. These are mere fabrications devoid of any basis in reality. Similarly, interpreting the movements of trees as warnings of future events is nothing more than superstitious nonsense.

They claim: In the past, on a Saturday night, in the dwelling of one of our elders, a donkey brought a load of plaster and deposited it in the hallway. Upon witnessing this event, the gentleman summoned his servants, and, employing shovels, they promptly emptied the plaster from the house, only to replace it the following day! This is because it is believed that bringing anything into the house on a Saturday night portends misfortune. This is utter ignorance.

Consider the peculiar custom that forbids the bride from joining her mother during the procession to the groom's residence. If she does so, the groom's mother allegedly erupts in a tirade. Why? Because marrying on a Friday night will lead to the demise of the groom's mother. However, what evidence supports this belief? I solemnly swear I have no idea! It is possible that, at some point, someone desired to get married on a Friday night, but the mother-in-law vehemently opposed it, declaring, "If you do this, such and such will transpire!" This custom endured, eventually morphing into a nonsensical superstition.

Indeed, the authoritative narrations advocate that a man should embark on his preparations for Friday prayers by meticulously clipping his nails, taking a purificatory bath, and engaging in thorough cleansing on Thursday itself.[32] This proactive approach ensures that he is impeccably prepared for the Friday congregational prayers without the need for hasty last-minute preparations on Friday morning.

The following ignorance is idolatry

Individuals who subscribe to superstitions are often misguided and uninformed. They anchor their actions on these baseless beliefs despite the absence of any empirical substantiation. This phenomenon resembles idolatry, where individuals venerate inanimate objects, attributing them to their sentience and ability to influence their lives. Such beliefs are entirely unfounded and erroneous. Our actions should instead be guided by reason and evidence, not by superstitions that lack any credible basis.

Certain idols, such as the golden idols of Lat and Uzza, which were sculpted from stone and reached the human size, were revered through elaborate vows, sacrifices, and the beheading of children before them.[33] Idolaters attributed human emotions to these inanimate objects, claiming their anger and affection mirrored their own. They would say, 'The idol truly feels anger towards us! We must appease him; if we do not, he will not be pleased!' They acted on this basis.

Our superstitious beliefs are a form of idolatry.

Even our innocuous customs and practices can be veiled forms of idolatry. Sizdah Bedar,[34] for instance, does it not mirror the very essence of idolatry? When individuals believe that thirteen is imbued with misfortune, their perception becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. They reinforce this notion by perpetuating the myth that engaging in any activity on the thirteenth day is a harbinger of bad luck. They even advocate for bizarre rituals, such as venturing into the desert to bind grass, as remedies to ward off negativity.

Emphatically, from a practical perspective, the numbers 13, 12, and 14 are devoid of inherent differentiation.

The concept of 'unlucky' numbers is an irrational and harmful superstition with no basis in reality. Whether you call a number '12+1' or '14-1', it is still the same number. The belief that thirteen is unlucky is often based on fear and superstition rather than factual evidence. It can lead to irrational behavior, such as leaving the thirteenth floors of hospitals empty. This belief is unreasonable and can also be harmful and lead to patients being denied access to care.

Superstitions disguised as civilization and culture

Ironically, the same individuals who claim to uphold civilization and culture often embrace superstitions. They close down a room simply because it is named after the unlucky number

thirteen, wasting resources and perpetuating irrational beliefs. They even let these unfounded notions dictate their travel plans, business decisions, and daily routines. If left unchecked, such superstitions can hinder progress, stifle innovation, and bring about the downfall of society.

These actions and beliefs will be held accountable before the Exalted God. God will question the foundation and rationale behind such practices. Did the Prophet or Imam sanction them? What is the basis for these beliefs, and where do they originate? Those who claim to embody Islam and strive for its advancement, what kind of movement is this? If you persist in these superstitions, you will face the severest consequences, for God metes out rewards and punishments.

Is this not idolatry? The idolatry that the men and women of Taif practiced and their profound attachment to their idols culminated in mass mobilization, mourning, and women venturing into the streets without their veils. It is said that when a calamity befalls Arab women, a catastrophe so profound that no other compares, they emerge unveiled, exposed, with their heads bare and hair disheveled. Muhammad sent them to shatter the idol of Lat. Is our situation any different? Then why do we mock their actions?

Ignorance is clinging to traditions rooted in misconceptions and superstitions.

We must abandon the habit of mocking the Brahmanical and Buddhist faiths, as we are guilty of idolatry. Idolatry elevates something unreal, declaring it authentic and wholeheartedly embracing it firmly. The core tenets of Islam, the Quran, the Prophet's teachings, and the directives of the Commander of the Faithful vehemently oppose the practice of superstition. Shia Islam shares this stance. However, the Sunni doctrine, the Jewish doctrine, and the Christian doctrine – not the essence of their faiths – endorse these misguided beliefs. This is because the foundations of these religions are built upon misconceptions and superstitions. Superstitions are devoid of factual basis, yet they are given credence and acted upon.

The Commander of the Faithful is far removed from such practices, and the Quran, too, stands in stark contrast. Ignorance, the Quran unequivocally asserts, is the gravest of sins. Ignorance manifests through customs and etiquette that individuals adhere to out of a lack of knowledge, comprehension, and discernment. The pre-Islamic Meccan polytheists, blinded by their ignorance, exhibited politeness as a result of their adherence to these customs.

The pre-Islamic Arabs practiced idolatry, circumambulated the Kaaba while blowing whistles, and even performed the circumambulation naked. These customs were relics of the Jāhiliyyah, a period of ignorance and darkness. With the advent of the Quran, these practices were unequivocally denounced, leaving no room for ambiguity. The Quran's message was clear: The world had been illuminated by the light of Islam, and these archaic customs were incompatible with this newfound enlightenment.

Jāhiliyyah customs are the worst sins in Islam.

Therefore, the worst insult that was given to those traditions in Islam is the Jahiliyyah custom.

إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ

When those who disbelieve put arrogance in their hearts, it is the arrogance of ignorance.

For the believers, Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger, and the believers are the opposite of those customs of ignorance.

فَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

□

We sought the mercy and pardon of God, and God reciprocated with His boundless mercy. This foundation was our pride, honor, eminence, and majesty. Yet, suppose an individual seeks fulfillment in these customs. In that case, the outcome is a revival of the antiquated practices of ignorance, such as Nowruz, Mehregan, Haft-sin, samanu, Sizdah, and the like. Suppose Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, along with other religious festivals, fade into the annals of history, surviving only in name. In that case, it is then that the following reminder arises:

ايقَنتُ انَّكَ أرحمُ الرّاحمينَ في مَوضعِ العفوِ و الرّحمة و أشدُّ المُعاقبينَ في مَوضعِ النّكالِ و النّقمة.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ.[35]

You are the Most Merciful in the domain of forgiveness and compassion and the most severe avenger in punishment and retribution. Indeed, Allah does not change what is with a people until they change what is within themselves.

This signifies that if we, as individuals, transform, God will also change. Nevertheless, if we remain unchanged, then nothing will change. If we conduct ourselves righteously, God will shower us with blessings and mercy from the heavens and the earth. Conversely, if we fail to mend our ways and stray from righteousness, God will unleash wrath and anger upon us. God possesses two hands, both of which are right: One hand is imbued with grace and signifies His boundless mercy in the realm of forgiveness and compassion; the other embodies His majesty and represents His status as the most severe avenger in the arena of punishment and retribution.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ.

O God, bestow Your blessings upon Muhammad and the household of Muhammad.

مجلس سوم
أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
و صلى الله علىٰ محمد و آله الطاهرين
و لعنة الله علىٰ أعدائهم أجمعين من الآن إلىٰ قيام يوم الدين

اللهم إني أفتتح الثناء بحمدك، و أنت مسدد للصواب بمنك، و أيقنت أنك أنت أرحم الراحمين في موضع العفو و الرحمة، و أشد المعاقبين في موضع النكال و النقمة، و أعظم المتجبرين في موضع الكبرياء و العظمة.

And I am confident. O my Lord. that You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful in a place of forgiveness and mercy; the Most Severe in Retribution in a place of vengeance and punishment; and the Most Exalted in Greatness and Pride in a place where your greatness, majesty, and pride are challenged.

Although you are a single God, these contradictory names and attributes exist in you. You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful, whose mercy is greater than that of all merciful beings, and the Most Severe in Retribution, whose severity of action is greater than that of all punishers, and the Most Exalted of the Exalted, whose greatness and majesty is more excellent and more magnificent than that of all the powerful and dignified.

First, we must also see if these opposing qualities are contradictory.

The unity of origin and source in all the contradictory attributes of God

The fact that God shows mercy in the context of forgiveness and gives punishment in the context of humans needing reward and punishment are attributes of God based on a single origin and source.

Just as we see among ourselves that a father gets angry with his child or shows mercy, even though anger takes the form of wrath, punishment, and violence, and mercy takes the form of affection, love, joy, and pleasure, the father is one and has one attribute. He shows love on the same basis on which he shows anger, and he laughs at his child and sits him on his lap on the same basis on which he hits him .Wherever he sees that the child has done something good and should be encouraged, he laughs at and rewards him; wherever he has made a mistake, he punishes him. Because the child has made a mistake, if he laughs at him, he will lead him to destruction .The laughter in that position is for the child's growth, and the anger is also for the child's development. They both have one source but appear in two ways and forms. The manifestation of the attribute of mercy and compassion in the father occurs in two different places and in two forms, not that the father has two contradictory attributes. Two contradictory attributes do not arise from a single thing.

Contrary to popular understanding, a lamp does not create light and darkness. Instead, all that emanates from it is light, albeit in various forms. The spectral composition of light varies based on its interaction with matter, resulting in manifestations ranging from visible wavelengths like blue, green, and yellow to invisible wavelengths like infrared and ultraviolet. While these colors appear distinct to the eye, they all originate from the same source, sharing a fundamental unity. Therefore, at their core, all these colors are the same.

Though seemingly contradictory from our limited perspective, the multifaceted nature of the divine converges towards a singular essence. This convergence transcends human limitations of language and conceptualization, simplifying the disparate attributes into a harmonious whole. All of these attributes are combined in the name of ‘alim(the Knowing) and Qadir (the Powerful), and those two are combined in the name of Al-Hay(the Living), and Al-Hay is annihilated in the name of Allah; and Allah is also annihilated in the name of Hu (He), which is the essence and identity of the Haqq (truth), and here, there is nothing imaginable other than a Basīṭ and Incorporable (Mujarrad) Essence.

Explanation of the principle of "the one" (al-Wāḥid)

The principle of «الواحدُ لا يَصدُر منه إلا الواحد» "The One" (al-Wāhid) is a rational principle that is the basis of many arguments. For example, from the essence of God, which is existence, non-existence cannot come forth. From light, darkness cannot come forth. Evil cannot come forth from a human being whose essence is good. Corruption, decay, and impurity cannot flow forth from one whose essence is purity. Therefore, God is One, and all of the attributes that descend from the essence through various specifications all return to the unity of the essence. However, in different locations, they appear in other forms. In one place, they appear as knowledge, and in another place, as power. In one place, we say "hearing," and in another, "sight." For example, among human beings, what a person perceives through the eye is called "sight." What a person perceives through the ear is called "hearing." Therefore, two attributes of hearing and sight are found in humans. However, in God, there is no eye or ear! The hearing and sight attributed to God are all in the sense of alim (the Knowing), and the difference between hearing and sight does not exist in Him. Samii (Hearing) means "knowledge of what is heard," and Basir (sight) means "knowledge of what is seen." In other words, the very knowledge of God of what we perceive with the ear is called "hearing." What we perceive with the eye is called "sight." Therefore, there are not two centers, one hearing and the other sight.

The manifestation of the greatness and mercy of God in Imam Ali

People who are annihilated in the essence of God and have reached the rank of Wilayat Kulliyyah (universal vicegerency) are the same way. Imam Ali, peace be upon him, is the "divider of heaven and hell."[36] Imam Ali is always a person who is full of laughter, kindness, and love. This is in the place of forgiveness and mercy. But in the place of punishment, he is no longer the most merciful, but instead takes up the sword, as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: He will cut you down with the sword![37] He will put all your brave men under the sword like chewed grass crushed in the mouth. In the place where the greatness and majesty of God want to manifest itself and Ali takes up the sword, there is no longer any consideration for forgiveness and mercy!

Ali, renowned for his compassion, embodies humility unlike any other. When traversing the streets of Kufa, he encounters impoverished individuals: a needy soul, a young orphan, an older woman struggling with a water jug. Witnessing their plight, he cannot hold back his tears. He chooses to dine with them, sharing laughter and finding joy in their company.[38] Yet, this gentle facade transforms when faced with injustice. Witnessing the oppression of the vulnerable, the defiance of faith, or the commission of sin that demands retribution, he sheds his merciful demeanor. No longer content with mere patience, he takes decisive action to defend the righteous, correct corruption, and uphold religious integrity.[39]

The tale of Bani Thaqif's embracing of Islam

As the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) laid siege to Ta'if's fortifications, he recognized the impending Hajj season, necessitating an abrupt departure from the ongoing conflict to fulfill this sacred obligation.

The Siege of Ta'if took place after the Conquest of Mecca, and according to Islamic teachings, Muslims were obligated to perform Hajj in the month of Dhul-Hijjah to prevent polytheists from entering the same sacred sites naked as they had done previously.

In the past, some individuals would engage in circumambulation around the Kaaba in a state of undress, claiming that their clothing would defile the holy site and constitute a sin.[40]

The Banu Thaqif were among the leading and wealthiest tribes of the Hijaz and were known for their beauty, wealth, status, and personality. They lived in a temperate climate and had vineyards. They sent a delegation to the Prophet Muhammad. The delegation assured the Prophet they would negotiate with him in good faith and were confident that a settlement could be reached. Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, after besieging Taif for seventeen days, went to Mecca and performed the Umrah. He then appointed a person to oversee Mecca and immediately returned to Medina.

The first delegation from the tribe of Thaqif was a single man named Urwah ibn Masud al-Thaqafi. He was their envoy and a man of independent thought, good judgment, and broadmindedness.[41] He was seeking to determine the truth of the Prophet's message. He was also a polytheist who worshipped the idol Lat.

Lat was in Taif and Uzza was in Mecca. Whenever he fought with the Prophet, Abu Sufyan did so in the name of Uzza. Their slogan in the Battle of Uhud was, "We have Uzza, and you have no Uzza!" The Prophet also said:

الله مَولانا و لا مَولى لكم![42]

Allah is our protector, and you have no protector!

They kept shouting that slogan, and by chance, they also brought Uzza with them to the Battle of Uhud. Upon returning to Mecca, these individuals adhered to a customary practice. Before proceeding to their homes, they would pay their respects to Uzza by circumambulating, shaving their heads, and offering a sacrifice. This ritualistic observance served as a preliminary act before their homecoming. Abu Sufyan also did the same. When he returned from the Battle of Uhud, he came to Mecca, shaved his head, sacrificed, circumambulated Uzza, and left. Historically, the idol Uzza held greater significance than the other deities in the Kaaba.

Lat in Taif was a vital and ancient idol. All the people of Taif were polytheists and idolaters, and there were no Jews or Christians among them. The people poured out a wealth of jewels and symbolically interred the resources of gold mines beneath the idol, signifying their devotion to it.

Urwah ibn Masud was a polytheist, but he was also a wealthy man with a tribe, a garden, and a fortune. He was also a thoughtful man with a personality. In some interpretations, it is said that the verse of the Qur'an states,

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ.[43]

Why did God not reveal the Qur'an to one of these two great men who lived in the two cities of Mecca and Taif?

The individual they were alluding to from Mecca was Walid ibn Mughirah, the father of Khalid ibn Walid.[44] Walid ibn Mughirah was a prominent idolater who never embraced faith until his passing! He ridiculed the Prophet, and when the verses of the Qur'an were presented to him, he remarked, "I must carefully consider this." He took the Qur'an and strolled about his home, concluding, "This is enchantment!" As a result, a surah has been sent down in the Qur'an denouncing him, in which it is stated:

ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ * فَقَالَ إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْثَرُ * إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ * سَأُصْلِيهِ سَقَرَ * وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرُ * لَا تُبْقِي وَلَا تَذَرُ * لَوَّاحَةٌ لِلْبَشَرِ * عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ.[45]

All these verses have been revealed about him: We will take him and [we will mark him] on the nose.

سَنَسِمُهُ عَلَى الْخُرْطُومِ.[46]

Walid ibn Mughirah was a powerful, wealthy man who led the Quraysh tribe and was a staunch opponent of Islam. When presented with the Qur'an, he was initially impressed by its eloquence and beauty. However, he eventually concluded that it was simply magic.[47]

Another person that the Meccans were referring to when they said, "Why wasn't the Qur'an revealed to the great man in Taif?" was Urwah ibn Masud al-Thaqafi. He was also a wealthy and powerful man who ruled Taif. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) besieged Taif, Urwah went to a distant place to prepare a mangonel and a battering ram to bring back to Taif. They planned to use the mangonel to bombard and shoot arrows at the Prophet's army from the top of the city walls.[48]

All of this is rooted in ignorance and lack of knowledge. When an individual becomes ignorant, they develop a solid attachment to long-held customs and traditions, and this belief gradually becomes ingrained in their soul, becoming an integral part of their instincts and nature. Out of ignorance, they cling to their beliefs tenaciously, even sacrificing their own lives. The inhabitants of Taif were no exception in their devotion to their idols, and they exhibited such staunch adherence to idolatry that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was compelled to adopt a firm stance against them. Now, I shall reveal to you the message he sent to them.

When the Muslims set out to conquer Taif, they laid siege to the city for seventeen days but were unable to breach its defenses. This was due to the towering heights of the city's walls,

which presented a formidable obstacle to the Muslim forces. The Muslims were faced with two options: either remain in the vicinity of the walls for an extended period, risking dwindling supplies, or attempt to scale the walls and storm the city.[49]

In those days, battering rams or chariots were used to breach castle walls. These structures were like chambers formed from sturdy wood, yet they were lightweight enough to maneuver. Their roofs were made of thick animal hides, like buffalo hide, which could be around one and a half centimeters thick. Thick skin was the most robust material to prevent the arrows or spears hurled above the castle from piercing it.

The soldiers would position themselves inside the chambers, and the hides would provide shade. The chamber, akin to a tank, would be maneuvered to the base of the castle wall. The soldiers would then utilize it to break through the wall forcefully. Creating an opening large enough to enter the castle could take two, three, or even four days. Once the breach was made, it would form a passage for the soldiers to enter. The courageous warriors would storm the castle and engage in fierce combat within its walls.

The Muslims maneuvered their armored vehicles near the fortress in an attempt to breach its defenses. From the fortress's ramparts, the defenders unleashed a barrage of molten metal, raining down upon the approaching troops. Unlike conventional fire attacks, the defenders employed heated iron rods instead of burning wood, ensuring the scorching projectiles pierced through the vehicles' armored hulls and caused severe damage.

Despite their initial efforts, the Muslims were thwarted by this innovative defense strategy. The ferocity of the molten metal assault resulted in a significant loss of life, with ten or twelve soldiers succumbing to the searing heat. Recognizing the futility of their endeavor, the Muslims were compelled to abandon their attempt to breach the fortress's defenses.

The defenders of the fortress sent a message to Muhammad. They said, "O Muhammad, return to your people and not destroy our idols. If you do this, we will make peace with you."[50]

Urwah ibn Mas'ud traveled to Medina to represent his tribe and observe the situation of the Prophet Muhammad and his nascent community. Upon his arrival, he was warmly welcomed by the Prophet and immediately impressed by his wisdom and eloquence. Urwah was deeply moved by the Prophet's teachings and message of Islam and promptly embraced the faith[51]. He said to himself: There is no better way than this! There is no better tradition than this! This is a way that no one has gone straighter than this.[52]

لا يذهب عنه ذاهب.[53]

With his newfound conviction, Urwah expressed his desire to return to his people and invite them to Islam. The Prophet, concerned for Urwah's safety, cautioned him against such a venture, fearing that the people of Ta'if, still deeply entrenched in their pagan beliefs, might react violently. He asked the Messenger of God for permission to go and deliver the message to his people and invite them to Islam. The Prophet said, "If you go, they will kill you." [54]

إنّهم إذن قاتلوک.

He said: O Messenger of God! How can that be? They love me more than their eyes and respect and cherish me so much that they consult with me in all their affairs. How can they kill me? The Prophet remained silent and did not permit him.

Undeterred by the Prophet's warnings, Urwah remained steadfast in his resolve to spread the light of Islam. He returned to Ta'if and embarked on a courageous mission to guide his people towards the path of righteousness.

Upon arriving in Ta'if, Urwah did not pay respect to their idol of Lat, a custom for all visitors. His relatives were initially perplexed by this act, but they eventually dismissed it as a mere oversight or hindrance.

Gathering the people of Ta'if, Urwah began to preach Islam. He denounced their idol worship and extolled the virtues of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam. His eloquent recitation of the Quran left the audience spellbound and captivated. Mesmerized by the divine verses, the people of Ta'if inquired about the nature of this newfound faith. Urwah declared that the Quran was God's holy word and urged them to embrace this path of salvation.

Urwah ibn Mas'ud continued to preach Islam to the people of Ta'if. He described the Muslims in Medina, their prayers in the mosque, and the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad. He explained that Muhammad was not worldly but spiritual, guided by God's divine revelation. He

also warned the people of Ta'if that if they did not accept Islam, Muhammad would eventually conquer Ta'if.

The people of Ta'if were initially skeptical of Urwah's message. They accused him of being brainwashed by Muhammad and of abandoning his faith. They even called him a fool.

Their reaction deeply saddened Urwah. He could not believe that the people he had once loved and respected would now turn against him. He compared their behavior to that of a son who suddenly turns on his father and accuses him of murder.

Urwah continued to preach Islam to the people of Ta'if, but his efforts were unsuccessful. People who had obeyed him all his life welcomed him with open arms and held his words in high regard, but they now accused him of stupidity and foolishness when he opposed their national customs. In short, he could have done better. All of his people and relatives blamed and left him.

He, too, began to pray and recite the Quran in his house. It was only the first night that he had arrived. When it was time for the morning prayer, he stuck his head out the window and called the adhan (call to prayer). While he was still calling the prayer, one of his people and relatives shot an arrow from afar. The arrow hit the cephalic vein, and the blood did not stop until he died. As he was dying, he said:

اشهدُ ان لا إلهَ إلاّ الله و اشهدُ انّ محمّداً رسولُ الله.

I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. I bear witness that the true and honest religion is this, which God has said, and the Prophet has brought! Please convey my greetings to the Prophet and tell him: What you said, "If you go, they will kill you," was true; they killed me, but I consider this martyrdom in the way of faith and in the way of sacrifice to you a small matter, and if I had more lives and sacrificed them in your way, it would have been worth it.

When he was dying, two of his sons and one of his nephews, who had also converted to Islam in Medina, came with some of their assistants to take the archer and kill him in retribution. Urwah ibn Masud said: Do not do this! Stop! I have forgiven the blood of the archer so that there will be no trouble or war among you. Do not fight with each other! Instead of this fighting and war, sit down and think about your eternal salvation, unite with each other, and go to Muhammad and bring Islam.

He also willed that he be buried with the twelve martyrs of Islam who were martyred around the Ta'if siege, which the Prophet himself buried in a place known as the "Place of the Martyrs." There, he was buried.

Urwah's death deeply saddened the Prophet, Muhammad. He said, "The example of Urwah ibn Masud in my community is like that of the Believer of Yasin." The story of the Believer of Yasin is told in the Quran, in the 36th surah Yasin. The story begins with Jesus, peace be upon him, sending two disciples to Antioch to preach his message. The disciples were met with rejection and mockery by the people of Antioch, who accused them of being liars and sorcerers.

The people of Antioch then turned to the Believer of Yasin, a righteous man from their community. They asked him to refute the disciples' claims, but the Believer of Yasin refused. He told them that he believed in the truth of Jesus' message and was willing to die for it.

The people of Antioch were enraged by the Believer of Yasin's refusal. They surrounded him and began to beat him. The Believer of Yasin continued to proclaim his faith in Jesus, even as he was defeated.

Finally, one of the people of Antioch drew his sword and struck the Believer of Yasin, killing him instantly. The Believer of Yasin died a martyr for his faith in Jesus.

إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ.
فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا.
فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ□.

When We sent two to them, they rejected them. So, we strengthened them by a third.

فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُم مُّرْسَلُونَ.

They said, "We have come as missionaries on behalf of Jesus".

قَالُوا مَا أَنتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا وَمَا أَنزَلَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ.

They inquired, 'Why have you ventured forth? What kind of emissaries of the Exalted God are you? You are mere mortals, as we are, and the Merciful has not dispensed any revelation. Your utterances are nothing but fabrication'!

قَالُوا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُونَ * وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ.

God knows that we have come. (We do not need witnesses, for we know in our hearts that God has commanded us and that we are His messengers. Two of them were also prophets, in addition to being messengers of Jesus.) * [We only must preach openly].

قَالُوا إِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ

They said, "We believe that you are harbingers of misfortune, and we do not believe that you will ever bring us good. You have come here to wreak havoc, and all the misfortune that has befallen our town is due to you".

قَالُوا لَئِن لَّمْ تَنتَهُوا لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ[55]

We will pelt you with stones and punish you with a severe punishment.

وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَا الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَىٰ

In summary: A man came running from the city's far end. This is the believer of Surah Yasin. He came and advised the people, saying:

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ * اتَّبِعُوا مَن لَّا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَجْرًا وَهُم مُّهْتَدُونَ.[56]

Why do you reject these preachers? Their message is truthful and reasonable. Moreover, they provide evidence and attest to their claims: Every individual undertaking any task expects compensation, but these people do not solicit any reward from you! They have come to guide you, yet you ridicule them, mock them, and worse! But they persist in their mission without seeking any compensation. This is a testament to their genuine dedication to God. They have themselves found the path and are now leading you towards it.

He started speaking, and before he had finished, his people and relatives assaulted him, taking his life.

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ.

He was granted immediate access to Paradise upon his demise.

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ * بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ.[57]

When he opened his eyes, he said, 'If only my people could comprehend how my Lord has magnanimously forgiven me of all my transgressions and bestowed such exalted ranks and positions upon me! I wish those misguided, obtuse, and foolish individuals among them could perceive the grandeur and majesty that now envelops me'!

قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ.

Upon succumbing to death, the Believer of the People of Yasin was swiftly ushered into the realm of barzakh, where he was bestowed with divine grace and let out a triumphant cry. This is in response to those who deny the existence of barzakh, asserting that upon death, individuals remain suspended until the Day of Judgment, with no intermediary realm between the two.[58]

This is the tale of the Believer of the People of Yasin, a devout individual whose name is mentioned in Surah Yasin and who belonged to the community of Jesus. Upon hearing of the death of Urwah ibn Mas'ud, the Prophet Muhammad said, "In my community, he is a paragon of the Believer of the People of Yasin." Urwah embraced Islam and then returned to his people in Taif to invite them to the faith. They rejected his message and, in a fit of rage, killed him.[59]

Urwah ibn Mas'ud, the maternal grandfather of Ḥaḍrat Ali Akbar (peace be

upon him)

Delving deeper into the ancestry of Urwah ibn Mas'ud, it is noteworthy to recognize his position as the grandfather of Hadrat Ali Akbar, the esteemed patriarch. Hadrat Ali Akbar, whose life was tragically cut short in the Ashura tragedy, was born to Layla bint Murrah ibn Urwah ibn Mas'ud Thaqafi. This lineage traces Layla's lineage to Murrah, son of Urwah, thereby establishing Layla as Urwah's granddaughter. Urwah ibn Mas'ud Thaqafi's marriage to the sister of Abu Sufyan, a figure within the Banu Umayyah tribe, further enriches Hadrat Ali Akbar's lineage. As a result, Hadrat Ali Akbar descends from the Hashemites paternally, while his maternal lineage encompasses the Banu Umayyah and Banu Thaqif.

During the lifetime of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), one day, Mu'awiya sat with his companions and said. "Today, I want to ask you a question, and you must answer me!" He said, "Who is the best person in the world today who can govern the Muslims in every way?" They said. "Of course, it is you, our esteemed master"! He said, "No!" This was now a private and intimate gathering, as he was with Dhuhak ibn Qays, Busr ibn Artat, and his other drinking companions, and each one said something. He said, "No! You did not speak the truth." They said, "Well, you tell us"! He stated: This day, no person on the earth is more worthy than Hadrat Ali Akbar. He possesses Banu Hashim's courage, Banu Umayyah's generosity, and Thaqif's pride.

فيه شَجاعةُ بنيهاشمٍ، و سَخاءُ بنيأُميّةَ، و زَهوُ ثقيف.[60]

He embodies three qualities that no one else possesses: The courage of Banu Hashim, the generosity of Banu Umayyah, and the beauty, freshness, cheerfulness, and good looks that are found in the Banu Thaqif.

Of course, the claim that the Banu Umayyads were generous is a flagrant lie! History has meticulously documented that the Banu Umayyads were a notoriously depraved and contemptible clan. Yet, what can we do to rectify this misfortune? Indeed, no single clan surpassed the Banu Hashim in their unparalleled generosity! This is a well-established fact corroborated by numerous historical accounts. The Banu Hashim would selflessly give away even the rug under their feet despite their lack of such a necessity. In stark contrast, Mu'awiya, the self-proclaimed paragon of generosity, sits idly by, plundering the public coffers of Muslim cities, redistributing these ill-gotten gains among his cronies in the form of extravagant half-million-dirham handouts. What he calls generosity is merely a smokescreen for his insatiable greed.

As a consequence, on the fateful Day of Ashura, the Umayyad army was mainly determined to capture and detain Hadrat Ali Akbar, alleging his distant familial connection to the Umayyad leader, Yazid. This was because Urwah's wife, the sister of Abu Sufyan, also happened to be the aunt of Yazid and Mu'awiya.[61]

Continuing the tale of Bani Thaqafi's embrace of Islam

In the heart of Taif lived a man named Malik ibn Awf, the chieftain of the Hawazin tribe, who spearheaded their formidable force in the Battle of Hunayn.[62] A man of paradoxical character, he was a fearless warrior and a staunch pagan, echoing the likes of Abu Sufyan. [Intriguingly, he, too, embraced Islam after a series of events unfolded.][63]

One scorching afternoon, a pagan leader named Amr ibn Umayya arrived in Taif, and his footsteps led him to the residence of Abdul-Yaliil, where he proclaimed, "I demand an audience!" Upon hearing the announcement, Abdul-Yaliil's servant rushed to him, uttering that so-and-so requests your presence.

Abdul-Yaliil, perplexed by this unexpected visit, pondered, "Why would a leader like him seek me out? A thousand individuals like me ought to visit him. This must be a matter of dire urgency!

Amr ibn Umayya approached Malik ibn Awf and inquired, "What brings you here?" Malik responded, "The matter of Muhammad is of immense gravity! Muhammad is a source of concern! Are you aware of the atrocities he has committed? He has seized Mecca, eradicated all the idols, and held the entire Arabian Peninsula under his dominion! We are at a loss to comprehend how he has captivated the hearts of every youth, drawing them to his cause like a

magnet! This requires immediate attention! Shame on you for your lethargy within this fortress! Such inaction is beneath a man's dignity! Emerge from your sanctuary and confront Muhammad in battle, lest he descends upon you tomorrow, vanquishes your kingdom, and crushes you beneath his ironclad might."

Abdul-Yaliil replied, "You are correct! You have captured my exact thoughts. I cannot conceive of any alternative course of action. What should I do now? This is the only path forward.

Amr declared, "I merely desired to reiterate this crucial point and to urge swift action. Strategically plan, prepare, mobilize the youth, amass your resources, and employ every available means to eradicate this man's evil influence from the minds of all Arabs and the entirety of the Arabian Peninsula." With those words, he departed.

Abdul-Yaliil and a group of men from the Bani Thaqif decided to travel to Medina as a delegation to meet with the Prophet Muhammad. They aimed to observe the situation and negotiate a peace treaty. They were willing to engage in peace negotiations that would end the ongoing conflict and permit them to maintain their pagan beliefs. While their initial delegation consisted of six members, their ranks gradually swelled to thirteen as they progressed towards Medina.

En route, they encountered Mughirah ibn Shu'ba, a man with a long and complex history with the Prophet. Mughirah promptly informed the Prophet of the delegation's arrival, eliciting joy from the Prophet's heart. This jubilation was a recurring sentiment whenever a delegation visited Medina, as the Prophet found it challenging for a delegation to depart without embracing Islam. The delegation would witness the Prophet's companions, observe his prayers, peruse the Quran, and witness the equitable treatment of women and men. This exposure would inevitably lead them to compare these practices with their customs and traditions. The Prophet's delight was palpable.

Upon reaching Medina, Mughirah offered to accompany the delegation to his residence. Mughirah, hailing from Taif and being a Bani Thaqif member, raised the Prophet's suspicions. The Prophet promptly declined, declaring, "You are not trustworthy!" This statement concealed a deeper narrative, but Mughirah's insistence prevailed, leading him to guide the delegation to his home.

The delegation regularly sought audience with the Prophet, immersing themselves in the verses of the Quran and his prayers. A young man, approximately twenty years of age, discreetly converted to Islam, concealing his decision from his fellow delegates.

While residing in Medina, they enjoyed unrestricted access to the mosque and were free to enter and exit as they pleased. No one exerted pressure upon them to embrace Islam, as their mission was primarily to observe and negotiate. After contemplation, they declared, "Let us commence the negotiations." Their opening demand was that the Prophet allow them to retain their deity, Lat.

Despite their earnest pleas, the Prophet remained resolute, stating, "It must be destroyed!" Their subsequent request was to be excused from performing prayers, but the Prophet firmly refused, declaring, "There is no merit in a religion devoid of prayer!" Their resistance crumbled, and they embraced Islam, returning to their tribe as devoted followers.[64]

أعوذُ بالله من الشّيطان الرّجيم
بسم الله الرّحمن الرّحيم
و صلّى الله علىٰ محمّدٍ و آله الطّاهرين
و لعنةُ الله علىٰ أعدائهم أجمعين مِن الآن إلىٰ قيامِ يوم الدّين

و أيقنتُ أنّکَ أنتَ أرحمُ الرّاحمينَ فی مَوضعِ العفوِ و الرّحمة، و أشدُّ المعاقبينَ فی مَوضعِ النّکالِ و النّقمة، و أعظمُ المتجبّرينَ فی مَوضعِ الکبرياءِ و العظمة.

I am utterly convinced that You are the epitome of benevolence and grace in the domain of forgiveness and mercy, that You are the supreme dispenser of justice in the realm of retribution and reward, and that You are the omnipotent and majestic in the face of any who dare to challenge Your grandeur, majesty, and glory.

Exalted Lord, having praised Your attributes of beauty and majesty in remembrance of You, I now present my supplications:

اللّهمّ أذنتَ لی فی دُعائکَ و مَسألتکَ؛ فاسمَعْ يا سَميعُ مِدحتی، و أجِبْ يا رَحيمُ دَعوتی، و أقِلْ يا غفورُ عَثرتی! فکَمْ يا إلهی مِن کُربةٍ قد فرّجتَها، و هُمومٍ قد کَشفتَها، و عَثرةٍ قد أقلتَها، و رحمةٍ قد نَشرتَها، و حلقةِ بلاءٍ قد فکّکتَها!

O God, You have granted me the liberty to invoke Your presence, make requests, and supplicate to You. Now that You have bestowed this permission upon me, O God of All-Hearing, heed the praises I extol upon You! O Lord of Compassion and Mercy, accept my prayers and supplications without denying them. O Lord of Forgiveness, overlook my transgressions and sins. I have committed transgressions, encountered dangers and mishaps, been beset by troubles and tribulations, and faced calamities from all sides. Yet, You have enveloped me in Your boundless mercy, pardoned all my faults, rescued me from perils and missteps, and guided me through treacherous paths. This is not an extraordinary feat for You; it is Your inherent nature. Since this is Your hallmark, I implore You to grant my petitions, accept my humble praises, and grant the favors I seek.

The grace of God in granting his servants permission to pray

اللّهمّ أذنتَ لی فی دُعائکَ و مَسألتکَ.

Your grace has granted me audience, and I now seek your favor.

Had God not granted permission, what would have transpired? Humanity would have been denied the privilege of prayer. They are servants, and God is their Master. The Master does not allow the servant to declare, "Proceed and present your needs at our hallowed threshold!" Instead, remain as you are: self-absorbed and consumed by your egotistic nature. You possess no path towards us. You are our servant, and we, the Master. What connection do a servant and their Master share?

أينَ التّرابُ و ربُّ الأربابِ؟[65]

What does dirt have to do with the sun?

God's permission for his servants to pray at any time and in any condition

God has permitted His servants to pray to Him at any time and in any condition. This permission is based on both His creation and His legislation. Creational permission: God, in His creation, has hardwired all beings to be able to connect with Him through prayer. This connection is inherent in our very existence. All creatures, from humans to animals to angels, are linked to God on a fundamental level. Legislative permission: Beyond this inherent connection, God has also given specific instructions on how and when to pray. These Instructions are found in the five daily prayers and other forms of worship, such as supplication and meditation.

The strong recommendation of supererogatory prayers

A person's obligatory prayers are for the weakest of the worshippers. In a hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said: The 17 rak'ahs that God has made obligatory are for the sake of the weak and the weakest of the worshippers.[66] This is because no man or woman, weak or strong, cannot fulfill these 17 rak'ahs. Therefore, they became obligatory.

However, for those who can go further, it is strongly recommended that they perform supererogatory prayers and pray twice the number of obligatory prayers.[67] Supererogatory prayers are also essential; they are written, that is, they are mentioned in the Qur'an! For example, the following verses are mentioned:

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ.[68]
كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ ... ٱلْوَصِيَّةُ.[69]

To you who believe fasting is prescribed for you, as prescribed for those before you, you may become righteous.

Prescribed for you is lawfulness, and forbidden to you is unlawfulness.

These are called written supererogatory prayers, meaning that you must perform them!

A significant hadith from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) on supererogatory prayers

There exists a hadith from Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) that states: A man approached the Imam and asked, "O son of the Messenger of God, I have no supererogatory prayers to perform, but I have missed some supererogatory prayers in the past. What should I do?" The Imam emphatically replied, "You must make up the missed prayers"! The man pleaded twice, "It is too much; I cannot make them up. What should I do"? The Imam firmly stated, "Make them up"! The man again inquired, "What should I do"? The Imam reiterated, "You must make them up"! The man asked, "If I do not make them up, should I give charity and make expiation"? The Imam replied, "Yes! Make expiation and give charity. "[70]

Therefore, devout Muslims and those who are mindful of God do not differentiate between obligatory prayers and written supererogatory prayers. They perceive all fifty-one rak'ahs as essential prayers that they must fulfill.

The wisdom behind the non-obligatory nature of supererogatory prayers

In His boundless compassion, the Creator has chosen to make supererogatory prayers recommended rather than mandatory, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, can reap the spiritual benefits of these practices. This approach aligns with His overarching principle of ease and simplicity, demonstrating His understanding of His creation's diverse capabilities and limitations.

By making supererogatory prayers recommended rather than obligatory, the Creator has opened up a path for individuals to elevate their spiritual connection with Him without feeling compelled to meet an unrealistic standard. This approach fosters genuine devotion and a deeper understanding of His grace, emphasizing the essence of faith over rigid adherence to rules.

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَآ إِن نَّسِينَآ أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَآ إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُۥ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِۦ.[71]

Our Lord does not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. Do not burden us with a burden as You have burdened those before us. Our Lord does not burden us with more than we can bear.

On the Night of Ascension, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) prayed to God, requesting that He make supererogatory prayers supererogatory. God accepted this supplication, and as a result, supererogatory prayers became optional rather than mandatory.[72]

Examples of arduous tasks in preceding faiths

Compared to today's duties, the earlier communities faced more demanding obligations. For instance, when the followers of Moses succumbed to idolatry and Moses descended from Mount Sinai, God did not mandate a simple act of prayer towards the Qiblah or Jerusalem to atone for their transgression and secure pardon. Instead, He decreed: Draw your swords and inflict fatal

wounds upon yourselves to expiate your sin. With the transgression you have committed, you must obliterate yourselves and your spirits. This is God's command, and repentance is only accepted if you conduct this act. Amidst an endless desert, seventy thousand individuals clashed with their swords, each slaying another, their cries of anguish and despair echoing across the vast expanse. This continued until their repentance was accepted, and the task was lifted.

The verse of the Qur'an in Surah Baqarah is:

فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِئِكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ.[73]

So, turn to your Lord in repentance and kill yourselves.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, did not impose harsh burdens upon us. He did not decree that committing a specific sin necessitates self-harm. These are all blessings brought forth by the Prophet's noble character, for he brought ease to the Muslim community.

The prophet's approach to removing hardship from the laws

During the Farewell Pilgrimage, when the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) went on the pilgrimage, many people asked him about various issues. The Prophet would always say,

إمضِ و لا حَرَجَ.[74]

Go ahead, no harm, no hardship!

However, many jurists make critical mistakes and give wrong instructions. For instance, they insist that the standing at Arafat must be done in a specific manner. However, this was not the case initially. It was obligatory to stand from noon until sunset. However, some people did not reach noon and arrived one hour before sunset. The Prophet said, "و لا حَرَجَ And there is no harm!" Some people did not reach Arafat from noon until sunset and arrived at night. When they asked the Prophet, he said, "There is no harm"!

These are all instances where the Prophet said, "There is no harm." Had it been a strict obligation, anyone who did not reach Arafat from noon or even five minutes later would have had an invalid pilgrimage and would have had to perform the Hajj twice. Similarly, it would have been considered invalid if someone had to miss the standing due to an emergency or voluntarily missed it but stood at Muzdalifah at night. However, the Prophet constantly said, "No harm"!

If God had said, "Everything is wrong!" Who could have moved forward? The Prophet's approach was to ease the burden and make it easier for people to follow the laws.

The prophet's unyielding efforts and unwavering commitment to facilitating a simple and accessible faith

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) meticulously paved a clear and straight path for his Ummah, relentlessly removing barriers and obstacles that hinder their progress. He tirelessly demonstrated the way forward, even shedding his sweat. He devoted himself to fervent prayers and prolonged supplications during the Night of Ascension, enduring trials and tribulations to illuminate the path for his followers. Despite providing an easy religion, many still need to recognize its profound significance. Instead, they harbor a sense of self-righteousness, believing their status as Muslims or Shias elevates them above others. It is a remarkable blessing to be guided by such simplicity and ease!

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of offering prayers at the appointed time. He stated, "The first part of the time is the pleasure of Allah, and the last part is the forgiveness of Allah."

أوّلُ الوقت رضوانُ الله، و آخِرُ الوقت غفرانُ الله.[75]

This implies that those who offer prayers on time demonstrate their obedience to Allah and seek His pleasure—conversely, those who offer prayers late exhibit disobedience and seek His forgiveness. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not make it obligatory to offer prayers at the appointed time, as he understood that people make mistakes and wanted to make religion easy for them to follow. Instead, he likened offering prayers at the appointed time to attend a banquet. While someone who arrives late may still be able to eat, they will not be able

to enjoy the finest dishes. Similarly, Allah may still forgive someone who offers prayers late, but they will not receive the same reward as someone who offers prayers at the appointed time.

Those who neglect their prayers or fail to perform them correctly will not receive the same blessings as those who offer their prayers diligently. They are akin to individuals who arrive late to a feast and must content themselves with the remnants of the meal.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was always willing to pardon those who sought repentance, irrespective of the gravity of their transgressions. He recognized that humans are prone to err and endeavored to allow them to reform their ways.

In Medina, three individuals were recognized as transgender. One of them was seated in a tent near Prophet Muhammad when he addressed an individual: "When you assume control of Ta'if, be sure to pursue that woman and acquire her! She is of this height and width, and her hair is as follows!" He then proceeded to describe her physique in detail. Prophet Muhammad grew exceedingly enraged and stated, "What an unusual circumstance! What an extraordinary event! This wicked individual utters such terrible things!" He then directed the man to be banished from Medina and relocate to a site between Mecca and Medina.

The individual was enslaved and lacked male identity. This is why Prophet Muhammad declared: "He is a hazard! If he interacts with women belonging to the Banu Hashim, it will be a catastrophe! This male is depraved"! Prophet Muhammad's companions exclaimed: O Messenger of God, please permit us to eliminate him." Prophet Muhammad replied: I am not directed to destroy him.

The Prophet was always inclined to minimize punishment. He would often say, 'Now that this man has exhibited these tendencies, he should reside in a distant location to prevent the corruption of society. Let women and men not be exposed to his harmful ideologies. However, since he still engages in prayer, he deserves respect, and we have no authority to execute him.' This exemplifies a lenient and compassionate legal framework.

The enduring blessing of Islam: Unrestricted communication with the divine

The ability to commune with the divine is a profound privilege bestowed upon humanity, and Islam has uniquely engendered this blessing in its flexible approach to prayer. Unlike other religions that constrain devotion to specific times and places, Islam liberates individuals to connect with their Creator whenever and wherever they desire.

It is a remarkable benefit that God allows humans to always communicate with Him! However, if our prayers were also restricted to a particular time, like Christians, we would be obligated to pray on Sundays and only in churches. Christians are prohibited from praying outside church buildings and are deemed invalid if conducted elsewhere. Their prayers are also invalid on Saturdays. Their worship is only observed on Sundays and is exclusively confined to church buildings, wherein they stand facing east and recite phrases in honor of the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Seeking divine aid from God's attributes: A unique feature of Islamic worship

Allamah Tabatabai, a renowned Islamic scholar, once remarked to the French scholar Henri Corbin: The Christian practice of limiting worship to specific times in church often hinders a person's path to the Exalted God. Individuals desire to engage in solitary devotion, Prayer, and supplication with God whenever they feel the urge. Yet, we tell them, 'Wait until Sunday comes, and then proceed to the church to pray!' They long to commune with God at that moment – isn't this a flaw in your religion? Corbin responded, "Indeed, this is a flaw, and I acknowledge it". Allamah Tabatabai elaborated, "In Islam, God possesses divine names that embody His impeccable attributes.

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا[76]

When facing adversity, one can call upon the Merciful God for solace. If an adversary threatens one's life, one can invoke the Avenger God for protection. If feeling weak, one can seek strength from the Powerful God. If enveloped in ignorance, one can seek guidance from the Knowledgeable God. These are but a few of God's countless names, each resonating with profound meaning.

Allamah Tabatabai underscored the versatility of Islamic worship, emphasizing its adaptability to various situations. "We Muslims can seek God's assistance through these names. However,

Christians need more flexibility. Their restricted practice involves worshipping three Gods – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – without encompassing attributes like knowledge, wisdom, mercy, compassion, or others. Even Judaism, with its recognition of mercy and compassion as divine attributes, falls short in this regard. If someone desires to exclaim to God, 'Provide me with water!' What name should they invoke? In their perception, God is not the bestower of water, nor does He heed their pleas, nor does He possess knowledge. Their God is essentially an incomplete entity."

Henri Corbin, acknowledging the shortcomings of Christianity, admitted, "During my moments of spiritual communion with God, I often turn to the Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyah and find myself moved to tears."[77]

Islamic teachings on seeking help from the good names of God to resolve any problem or difficulty

In Islam, worship in mosques, the Kaaba, and other holy places holds a higher spiritual value due to these locations' inherent sanctity and the associated purification rituals. However, this does not imply exclusivity, suggesting that personal devotional practices performed at home are useless. On the contrary, Muslims are encouraged to cultivate a devout spiritual connection with the Exalted God in their homes, engaging in worship whenever their hearts and minds seek solace and guidance.

اللهُمَّ أذنتَ لی فی دعائک.

You have granted me the privilege of prayer. He is a compassionate and benevolent God who gives humanity this communion gift.

While the obligatory fifty-one rakats of prayer serve as a foundation for spiritual growth, Muslims are encourage to transcend these requirements and continuously practice devotion.

الصَّلاةُ خَيرُ مَوضوعٍ، فمن شاءَ استقلَّ ومن شاءَ استَكثر.[78]

The divine mandate of 17 rak'ahs of daily prayer: A testament to divine compassion and inclusiveness

Prayer leaders should be considerate of the needs of their followers. If the followers are able-bodied, the Imam may recite long surahs. However, if there are any elderly or weak followers, the Imam should shorten the prayer. For an older woman who cannot perform ruku', the Imam should only recite the single ruku' takbir and a short sajdah supplication. He should not recite any long surahs.[79]

The Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings be upon him) often sent emissaries to regions where people had recently embraced Islam to teach them the proper prayer and Quran recitation methods. He would emphasize the importance of accommodating the needs of the least physically capable among their followers, instructing them to consider the least capable of their followers in prayer.[80]

A mystic was once asked about his religious practices. He responded by explaining that he engages in prayer to commune with God. Conversely, he reads the Quran when he seeks the divine to talk to him.

This profound statement captures the essence of prayer and Quran recitation in Islam. Prayer is a means of communication between the human and the divine. In prayer, we praise God, seek His help, and ask for His forgiveness. We also share our thoughts and feelings with God. When a man seeks divine dialogue, the holy word that resonates within his heart and soul is the Quran.

إنَّ صَلاتَنا ذِكرٌ و دعاءٌ و قُرآن.[81]

The composition of prayer combines dhikr, supplication, and the Quran.

It is widely held that if an individual introduces personal dhikr or supplications into their prayer, their structured form is compromised. For instance, if after reciting the Fatiha and a surah, a person desires to recite "La ilaha illallah" a hundred times before entering ruku', or if they delve

into ruku' and recite "Astaghfirullah" a thousand times before lifting their head, the notion holds that the prayer's structure becomes distorted, necessitating its preservation.

Where does the prescribed form of prayer reside? Who established the form of worship? In which verse or hadith is a specific form of prayer outlined so that we may alter or augment our actions by that form? The form of worship is simply that man stands before God, and there is a hadith:

إن صلاتنا ذكر و دعاء و قران.

Within the framework of prayer, Muslims can incorporate the recitation of the Quran, dhikr, and supplication. Therefore, upon completing the recitation of the Fatiha and a surah, a devout individual may utter "La ilaha illallah" a hundred times before transitioning into the ruku' position. During ruku', they may engage in a thousand repetitions of "Astaghfirullah" or "Subhanallah" before returning to an upright posture. Upon straightening their back, they may utter "La ilaha illallah" a hundred times before proceeding to sajdah. In sajdah, they may recite "Subhan Rabbi al-A'la wa bihamdihi" a thousand times before completing the prayer posture. This exemplifies the dynamic nature of prayer in Islam.

The essence of prayer lies not in its duration, which can vary from two to four hours. The companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would engage in extended prayers, often reciting lengthy suras of the Quran, such as Maryam, al-Kahf, and al-Baqarah. Likewise, the recommended prayers during the nights of Ramadan, wherein the entire Quran is recited during a single prayer, do not imply that one should solely dedicate their time to Quran recitation outside of worship.[82]

The importance of reciting the Quran in prayer

The recitation of the Quran is an integral part of prayer. In the time of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims would say, "Go read the Quran"[83] to refer to worship, as reciting the Quran was considered synonymous with prayer.

During each rak'ah of prayer, a person would begin with a greeting of God, known as the Fatiha, followed by reciting any portion of the Quran they desired. After bowing and supplicating, they would repeat the greeting and Taḥmīd (glorification of God) twice, with the best Taḥmīd being the Fatiha, being revealed twice to the Prophet.[84] Following the Fatiha, they would recite as much of the Quran as they desired, one juz (one-thirty-eighth of the Quran) or more. This is the traditional practice of reciting the Quran during prayer.

أقم الصلوة لدلوك الشمس إلى غسق اليل و قرءان الفجر. إن قرءان الفجر كان مشهود□ا.[85]

Establish prayer from the setting sun until the darkness of the night, and [also] the Qur'an of dawn. Indeed, the Qur'an of dawn is witnessed.

Pray from the beginning of noon until the middle of the night when the night becomes dark; this is a metaphor for noon, afternoon, evening, and night prayer.

و قرءان الفجر..

Pray the morning prayer as well.

Establish prayer at the sun's decline until the twilight's disappearance, and [also] the [optional] prayer at dawn. Lo! The prayer at dawn is ever witnessed.

The first part of the verse, "Establish prayer at the decline of the sun until the disappearance of the twilight," refers to the prescribed prayers that are performed at specific times of the day: Dhuhr (noon), Asr (afternoon), Maghrib (evening), and Isha' (night). The second part of the verse, "Lo! The prayer at dawn is ever witnessed," refers to the particular importance of the Fajr (dawn) prayer.

The name of the Fajr prayer in the Quran is "Qur'an of dawn," meaning the Quran is recited at the time of dawn. The night and day angels witness this Qur'an of dawn. Both the angels of the night, who are about to ascend to the heavens, and the angels of the day, who are about to descend to earth, accompany the Muslim who prays the Fajr prayer at the first call to prayer.[86] Therefore, the "Qur'an of dawn" refers to the Fajr prayer in the Quran.

Neglecting the Quran by reciting only surah al-ikhlāṣ in prayer

Observing how far we have strayed from proper prayer is disheartening. Our prayers are now confined to reciting a single chapter, Surah al-Ikhlas, while the Quran itself has been relegated to the back burner. This is a grave error, as the Quran is the cornerstone of our faith and a repository of divine wisdom that should be central to our prayers. Imam Riḍā (peace be upon him) poignantly highlights this concern, advising us:

أُمِرَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِرَاءَةِ فِي الصَّلَاةِ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ الْقُرْآنُ مَهْجُوراً.[87]

People were commanded to recite the Quran in prayer so that the Book of God would not be neglected.

The true essence of possessing the Quran lies in having its verses deeply etched into our minds. Merely owning a physical copy does not equate to understanding its profound wisdom. When the Quran is fully internalized, it becomes an inseparable part of our being, guiding our thoughts, actions, and spiritual development.

بَلْ هُوَ ءَايَٰتٌۢ بَيِّنَٰتٌ فِي صُدُورِ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلْعِلْمَ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَآ إِلَّا ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ.[88]

The Quran is a book of guidance for all people, but it is evident and understandable to those who have knowledge of God and the universe.

During the Prophet's time, those who had memorized the Quran had only memorized specific portions, not the entire text. Only a few individuals had memorized the Quran then, including Amir al-Mu'minin,[89] Ibn Mas'ud, and Ubiyy bin Ka'b.[90]

Umar, as the caliph, had to recite the Quran in prayers. However, it took him ten years to memorize Surah Al-Baqarah.[91] It is estimated that if he had wanted to learn the entire Quran, it would have taken him one hundred and fifty years.

Reading the Quran in prayer

There is no issue with reciting the Quran directly from a Quranic text in prayer. This practice is valid for both obligatory and voluntary prayers. Reciting the Quran from a Quranic text is far superior to solely relying on reciting the Surah Al-Fatihah. Relying exclusively on Surah Al-Fatihah is akin to abandoning the Quran, suggesting that the individual has forgotten the Quran entirely.

According to a hadith, Surat al-Ikhlas should be recited at least once or twice daily, whether during obligatory or voluntary prayers.[92] However, if such recitation becomes excessive to the point of neglecting the recitation of the entire Quran, it becomes problematic. This is a significant issue that has been extensively discussed in the volumes of Nur Malakut Qur'an. These volumes provide a comprehensive analysis of this matter.[93]

The Quran is God's direct communication with humanity. Just as one seeks dialogue with a cherished one, they also yearn for reciprocal exchanges. When individuals desire to converse With the Supreme Beloved, they pray. When the desire arises for the Supreme Beloved to address them, they delve into the Quran.

اللَّهُمَّ أَذِنْتَ لِي فِي دُعَائِكَ وَ مَسْأَلَتِكَ.

Within the Islamic tradition, there are two main perspectives on the nature of prayer: Tashrī' and Takwīn. Tashrī' refers to the divinely ordained forms and structures of worship, while Takwīn emphasizes the inherent human need and desire to connect with the divine through prayer. "Takwīn permission" refers to the intrinsic capacity for growth and development bestowed upon humanity by the Creator. This capacity is deeply rooted in our fundamental nature as beings defined by necessity and aspiration. From the microscopic level of our cells to the macrocosm of our souls and spirits, a constant drive toward fulfillment permeates our existence. Within this intrinsic need, we find the potential for continuous evolution and self-actualization, empowered by the very nature of creation.

Oxygen is an essential element of life that many people take for granted. However, if we take a moment to consider what would happen if we were deprived of oxygen for even a short period, we would quickly realize its immense value.

Haj Hadi Ebhari, the protagonist of this narrative, finds himself in a harrowing situation after a catastrophic car accident. He and his passenger are trapped amidst the twisted wreckage of a truck, and their breaths grow labored as they grapple with the suffocating confines of their predicament. With each passing moment, the fear of perishing intensifies a stark reminder of the preciousness of air, the essence of life itself. In this moment of despair, Hajj Hadi's awareness of the vital role of breathing intensifies, a profound realization that underscores the fragility of human existence and the profound significance of each breath we take.

The great blessing of defecation

One day, I spoke to a doctor and asked him, "Do you know the blessing of urination?" The doctor laughed and said, "What are you talking about, sir?" I replied, "The urine that comes out is something we do not consider a blessing at all! We say, 'Urinate,' but do not consider urination a blessing. If we were asked to sit down and count all of God's blessings, would we consider urination a blessing? Yes, or no?" However, suppose the path of the urine is blocked, and the prostate glands swell, preventing the urine from flowing out. In that case, the kidneys will continue to produce urine, accumulating in the bladder and putting pressure on it. This pressure will persist until it suddenly becomes painful! What can this poor patient do? The doctor understood my point. I said: Look at the pain that this causes! People suffering from this condition will run around the room in agony, banging themselves against the wall like a sparrow, banging their heads against the wall, picking up a brick, and beating their stomachs with it until their stomachs finally release the urine. Who considers urination a blessing? Only someone who experiences this pain will consider it a blessing!

Urination removes waste products, toxins, and excess fluids from the body. Now, let us put aside the issue of urinary retention for now. If these toxins were to remain in the body, they would poison the entire body. God takes the beneficial nutrients from our food and then eliminates the harmful and toxic substances. If we did not urinate, and these toxins remained in our bodies, what would happen? What if we did not defecate? People with colon cancer who cannot defecate long for death at every moment! This is because the waste products remain in their bodies and can cause terrible pain.

Importance of remembering God even when defecating.

Imam al-Sadiq advised people to say the following prayer when they go to the bathroom and urinate:

اَلحَمدُ لِلّهِ الّذی اماطَ عَنّی الأذیٰ و هَنّانی طعامی و شرابی و عافانی مِن البَلوی.[94]

Praise be to God who has removed harm from me, made my food and drink pleasant, and saved me from affliction.

This prayer is a beautiful expression of gratitude to God for the blessing of digestion and elimination. It also reminds us that God's blessings are everywhere, even in mundane activities like defecation.

أعوذُ باللهِ مِنَ الشَّيطانِ الرَّجيم
بِسمِ اللهِ الرَّحمنِ الرَّحيم
و صلَّى اللهُ علىٰ محمَّد و آلِهِ الطّاهرين
و لَعنةُ اللهِ علىٰ أعدائِهِم أجمَعينَ

اللّهمَّ أذِنتَ لی فی دُعائِکَ و مَسألَتِکَ؛ فاسمَع یا سَمیعُ مِدحَتی، و أجِب یا رَحیمُ دَعوَتی، و أقِل یا غَفورُ عَثرَتی!

Oh. God, You have permitted me to call upon You, to request from You, to pray to You, and to supplicate to You. Therefore, O Lord of All-Hearing, hear my praise to You, and O Most Merciful God, grant the answer to my prayers, and O Most Forgiving Lord, protect me from any misstep I may commit!

The sanction of divine law, reason, and human nature for seeking God's assistance

اللهمَّ أذِنتَ لی فی دُعائِکَ

You have graciously authorized me to invoke You!

We must investigate the nature of this authorization. Is it a legal sanction, an intellectual mandate, or a fundamental human right? The law may empower individuals to seek divine blessings, as certain traditions prescribe specific locations or times for worship, restricting these privileges to designated periods. Conversely, intellect dictates that humans should approach God with all desires, recognizing Him as the sole arbiter of their supplications. The permission to commune with God encompasses a blend of legal, intellectual, and innate elements. In other words, the human's innate inclination towards God, rooted in their nature, essence, and character, compels them to seek God even before they develop the capacity for reason and understanding.

An exploration of the interwoven principles of religion, reason, and nature

In many scenarios, individuals perceive the existence of three distinct layers of law: The law of nature, the law of reason, and the law of religion. For instance, while traversing the arid expanse of the desert, a parched individual on the precipice of dehydration unexpectedly stumbles upon a clear, refreshing stream of water. They do not require their rational faculties to inform them that quenching their thirst with water is imperative, as sustenance is intrinsically beneficial to human survival. Nor do they await religious edicts to legitimize their thirst-quenching endeavor. On the contrary, driven by an innate and instinctive impulse, they wholeheartedly plunge into the water without a moment's hesitation. This automatic response is rooted in the inextricable connection between humanity and nature. For the thirsty individual in this predicament, seeking water represents an inherent law that emanates from their very being. Whether acknowledged or not, this natural law operates independently of reason and religion.

The secret of Ḥaḍrat Abūlfaḍl's (peace be upon him) refusal to drink water

In many cases, the laws of religion and nature align with the laws of reason. For example, if a thirsty person in the desert finds water, their reason tells them to drink it, and their religion permits it. However, there are also times when the laws of religion and nature conflict with the laws of reason. For example, when Ḥaḍrat Abūlfaḍl (peace be upon him) went to the river Euphrates, his reason told him to drink the water so that he would be better able to defend his brother, Imam Husayn (peace be upon him). However, his conscience and innate nature told him to refuse the water out of unity and solidarity with his Master, Sayyid al-Shuhada.[95]

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was once presented with a bowl of delicious halva and nougat. As soon as he dipped his finger into the bowl and brought it to his lips, he pulled it back twice and rubbed it on the edge of the bowl. He then said: I was poised to partake in the delectable dish, but a profound memory of the Prophet (peace be upon him) halted my gastronomical

endeavor. His esteemed presence in my mind's eye reminded me of his lifelong abstinence from this particular fare. This recollection instilled an instinctive reluctance to consume something our revered Prophet had not deemed appropriate for his consumption.[96]

A conflict arises between the Imam's reason and conscience as the Imam contemplates consuming a dish that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had never partaken in. Reason insists that the Imam should indulge in the delicacy, emphasizing the passage of time and the Imam's unwavering devotion to the Prophet throughout his life. However, conscience prevails, driving the Imam to abstain from the dish out of deep reverence for the Prophet and a conviction that consuming something he had not partaken in would be an act of betrayal. The tension between these two internal forces concludes that he cannot override his conscience, preferring to forgo the meal rather than act in a manner that contradicts his fiṭrat (inherent disposition).

In many contexts, we can find analogous examples of these innate inclinations (fiṭrat). For instance, a mother caring for a sick child may lose her appetite for even the most delectable foods. In such situations, even if someone urges her to eat, explaining the importance of maintaining her strength to care for the child throughout the night, she might reply, 'I don't know why, but I simply cannot eat while my child is unwell!' This exemplifies the power of innate inclinations.

Sharia ruling on requesting from God

اذنتَ لی فی دُعائکَ.

You have allowed me to call upon You, O God!

What kind of permission is this? It is also a Sharia permission.[97]

لتَ لی الأرضُ مسجداً و طَهوراً.[98]

The earth has been made for me, a mosque and a cleaner.

This means that if a person reaches anywhere at noon, even without water, the earth is a purifier, and he must perform Tayammum and pray. Based on this Sharia ruling, man always calls upon God, and at any moment, he prays and asks for his needs.

Intellectual ruling on requesting from God

In addition to the sharia permission to request from God, there is also an intellectual permission. This is because God is the creator and sustainer of all existence and is the only one who can truly fulfill our needs. It is only logical for us to ask from God. We are small and insignificant compared to God's vastness and power. Therefore, we should seek help from the only one who can help us.

Imam Ali's advice on preserving self-respect

In one of his wills to Imam Hasan, given near the battlefield of Ṣiffīn in a place called Ḥāḍirayn, Imam Ali emphasizes the importance of preserving self-respect.[99] He states:

و أکرِم نَفسَکَ عَن کُلِّ دَنیّةٍ و إن ساقَتکَ إلی الرَّغائبِ، فَإنَّکَ لَن تَعتاضَ بِما تَبذُلُ من نَفسِکَ عِوَضاً.[100]

Raise your soul above, be more dignified, nobler, and more generous than any lowly and base work that comes your way, and do not touch it, even if that lowly and base work leads you to desires, ranks, positions, wealth, honor, and possessions. When you ask for that lowly thing for yourself, you are giving away your nafs (the self), and for the nafs, there is no substitute!

فَإنَّکَ لَن تَعتاضَ بِما تَبذُلُ مِن نَفسِکَ عِوَضاً.

No substitute in exchange for the nafs can be equal to and in balance with it.

The exclusive ownership of the human soul by God, a reason for not compromising with others

The human soul is the epitome of individuality, the bedrock of independence, and the essence of existence. God solely owns it! We must never compromise our faith or values for anything or anyone other than Him. By doing this, we would fail to capitalize on our full potential. Even if such a compromise leads us to fulfill our desires, it is not worth our price. Our souls will be lost and irretrievable.

It is quite perplexing! We degrade our souls by compromising with others, especially those wealthy or possessing material possessions. We diminish ourselves by humbling before them rather than before the Exalted God.

The grant of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) to a person who was not in need to preserve his dignity

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) told one of his close companions during his caliphate to give five wasq of Baghibghah dates to so and so. Each wasq is equivalent to several rotls, meaning that each wasq is half a kharwar,[101] and five wasqs are approximately two and a half kharwars of dates. The companion said: O Amir al-Mu'minin, this person does not need these dates. He is wealthy and has plenty of food. Imam Ali replied: I am not giving these dates to him because he needs them. I am offering to preserve his dignity. If I do not give them to him, people will think he is poor and cannot afford to buy dates. This will humiliate him. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said to him:

لا كَثَّرَ اللهُ فى المؤمنينَ ضَرِيكَ.

May God not allow your likes to increase among the believers!

Imam Ali exclaimed, "I am giving, yet you remain miserly?" If I fail to provide him with assistance to the extent that he is compelled to approach me seeking aid out of dire necessity or hardship, he humbly pleads and requests it. I have inadvertently shattered his honor, a possession that should not be relinquished for anything but prostration to the Exalted God.[102]

The expression is truly remarkable! Consider, for instance, the numerous individuals who outwardly are thriving, yet we fail to extend a helping hand until hardship and necessity compel them to seek assistance. If this occurs, you are aware of the consequences. The prostration that God has ordained for humans to perform in a position of humility, reverence, and servitude has been sold in exchange for a plea from a fellow human being, and what transgression could supersede this? A human being should exchange the character, authenticity, and core of another's honor, which should solely be exchanged with God for something other than God! Hence, "May God not increase your likes among the faithful!" is uttered. This implies: Perish, may God obliterate you! May God not create someone like you among the faithful while I am being generous, and you are being enticed [into miserliness] for this reason! I perceive something different while you behold something else!

The intrinsic need and potentiality of human existence

An inherent dichotomy of need and possibility lies at the core of human existence. This duality signifies our profound reliance on God for our existence, sustenance, and guidance.

This dependence manifests in every facet of our human experience. We require air to breathe, sustenance for nourishment, and water to quench our thirst – these fundamental needs are beyond our capacity to procure independently. This luminaire is continuously supplied with electrical power from the generating station, enabling light emission. In an analogous scenario, if a component within a system claimed sole responsibility for the overall function, denying its reliance on other parts, a logical response would be to isolate it and demonstrate its inability to function independently.

Humanity's essence is inherently in need and reliant upon God. Whether religious doctrines dictate prayer or whether human intellect suggests supplication to God, neither spiritual nor intellectual mandates hold validity. Such a verdict contradicts the judgment of the fiṭrat, and judging against the fiṭrat order is erroneous. Moreover, the Islamic faith, anchored in fiṭrat and intellect, espouses that whenever your heart desires, seek God's favor! We witness fiṭrat's alignment with intellect. Thus, Christians who confine their worship to a specific time and place

– Sundays in church – and must worship solely within church walls, rendering prayers and requests inapplicable elsewhere, fail to pray or supplicate outside church grounds. This is flawed, as their religion has obstructed their path, contrary to fiṭrat's design.

Verses on the legitimacy of prayer

اللهُمَّ أذِنتَ لي.

O Allah, You have permitted me!

You have permitted in three stages, nature, intellect, and sharia. In the stage of sharia, the verse of the Qur'an is:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ.

And your Lord said, 'Call upon Me, and I will respond to you. (Quran 40:60)

قُلْ يَٰعِبَادِيَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا۟ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا۟ مِن رَّحْمَةِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلْغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ.[103]

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ٱدْعُونِىٓ أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِى سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ.[104]

Say, O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Certainly, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

Pray! Repent! This is the Sharia. And your Lord said, "Call upon Me, and I will respond to you. Indeed, those who are arrogant about My worship will enter Hell humbled." I welcome your heartfelt desires with open arms, for I am the source of all fulfillment. Seek my guidance, and your prayers shall be answered. Come and immerse yourself in the boundless blessings that await you. Those who arrogantly turn away from my teachings and neglect my divine solace shall be consumed by the flames of their self-inflicted humiliation. Their pride, selfishness, and self-centeredness shall propel them into the inferno. They are unwilling to prostrate themselves before God, who is more fundamental, robust, resilient, steadfast, and beneficial than all other beings.

Prayer, in its various guises across the stages of human development - instinctive yearning, rational comprehension, and religious adherence - elevates and perfects the human spirit. It unveils man's innate servitude to his Creator, stripping away the veil that obscures his true essence. This is because man is a servant at the core, and when he petitions his Lord, he acknowledges his subservient nature - a servant possesses nothing, and all he has belongs to his master. Conversely, when a servant abstains from prayer, he denies his servitude and refuses to embrace his true purpose.

سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ.

We consign those servants who disavow their servitude to the flames so that their pride, self-importance, and ego may be incinerated.

The return of all beings to the presence of the lord in a state of servitude

إِن كُلُّ مَن فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ إِلَّآ ءَاتِى ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ عَبْدًا * لَّقَدْ أَحْصَىٰهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا.[105]

Indeed, all that is in the heavens and the earth will come to the Most Gracious [God] as a servant.

He has undoubtedly enumerated them and counted them with a [precise] count.

Whether they have inherently accepted their place in the divine order, like the close angels who have perpetually worshipped God or have yet to acknowledge it, like some among the jinn and humankind, all beings will ultimately submit and express their servitude.

If God were to tolerate [human selfishness and arrogance] and say it is permissible, this would harm His Lordship; for He is the Lord, the Original, the Eternal, and His essence is Self-

Sufficient and Firm, and there is no room for rupture, aperture, or instability in His Being. (In fact, the essence of God is the Original, and if you seek to remove the Original from Him, you have denied an essential aspect of His Being. This is impossible!) Therefore, all beings must submit to God's Lordship, and whoever does not will be dragged to hell in a state of disgrace and wretchedness.

سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ.[106]

Umar's anxiety, fear, and regret at the time of his death due to his injustice to the commander of the faithful (peace be upon him)

I witnessed a strange incident from Umar that was truly astonishing, and it is no less surprising that this incident is documented in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī! It narrates: When Umar was wounded and on the verge of death, he was gripped by intense anxiety and fear. Ibn Abbas arrived to visit him and inquired: O Commander of the Faithful! We do not anticipate you to be overwhelmed by anxiety and fear; being injured is insignificant! Is this such a crucial matter that prompts such anxiety and fear? You were a companion of the Prophet and served him faithfully; the Prophet departed, and after him, Abu Bakr assumed leadership. You served him as well, and he was pleased with your contributions. Following Abu Bakr's demise, you administered the affairs of the community, and now that you are preparing to depart this world, you are being bid farewell. At the same time, everyone holds you in high esteem. So, what is the source of this lament and anxiety? Umar said:

نما جزعی من اجلک و من اجل اصحابک.

My anxiety is because of you and your companions.

When Umar said, "Your companions," he referred to Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him). Ibn Abbas was a student of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) and one of his close companions. Umar knew that Ibn Abbas was loyal to Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), so he would use the phrase "your companions" whenever he wanted to talk about Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him). Umar says: I swear to God that if I had the weight of the earth in gold, I would ransom myself with it from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, before I saw it.[107]

Compare this to Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), who, when he was struck with a sword, said:

فزت و رب الكعبة.[108]

I have been victorious by the Lord of the Kaaba! And he laughed; he did not feel anxious or fearful; what are these words? Not that he did not feel nervous or scared, but instead, he said: I have been victorious by the Lord of the Kaaba!

However, Umar's actions throughout his life were marked by arrogance and a deviation from religious principles. This ultimately led to a transformation in his role from that of a servant of the people to a tyrannical ruler resembling a pharaoh. These actions did indeed have a significant impact on the course of Islamic history. This individual's actions squandered the Prophet's (peace be upon him) tireless efforts of twenty-three years. They condemned the Muslim community, believers of all stripes, and indeed the entire world, to a state of suffering that would endure until the Day of Judgement. His statement, "If I possessed gold as plentiful as the earth, I would willingly relinquish it," held a disturbing truth. He was acutely aware of the transgressions he had committed. Was he not, after all, privy to the Hadith of Ghadir? Had he not expressed his allegiance to the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, by declaring,

بخٍ بخٍ لک يا اباالحسن! لقد اصبحت مولای و مولی کل مؤمن و مؤمنة.[109]

You have become my master and the master of every believer, man or woman! Had he not uttered other such words? Now that he had been stabbed, was on the verge of death, and could

finally comprehend the reality that awaited him beyond the mortal coil, he uttered this poignant lament:" Would that I was a sheep amongst my kind."

There is another report in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī in which Umar ibn al-Khattab is quoted as saying: I would prefer to be a sheep among my people! A sheep so well-fed and grown to the point of no longer being able to gain weight. When one of their esteemed guests visits, they would slaughter the sheep in honor of the guest, cook it, and cut it into pieces. In this regard, I wish I were that excrement of this sheep and not a human being.[110]

There is a hadith recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī from the words of Umar: How I wish to be like a bird, free from accountability and reckoning! There is also a hadith recorded from Abu Bakr, which is particularly noteworthy given that it too appears in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī: On one occasion, Abu Bakr observed a bird perched on a tree. He exclaimed, Oh, bird, how fortunate you are! You soar from branch to branch, unburdened by responsibility. Your home is in the tree, and you feast on its fruits. You face no reckoning or accounting! I would gladly trade places with you, shedding the weight of Divine judgment and retribution.[111]

A hallmark of the straight path

Those who walk the straight path exhibit a distinct characteristic. When individuals act in a particular setting and lack clarity regarding the righteousness or wrongness of their deeds, a discernable pathway emerges. If the individual experiences regret after their actions, it becomes evident that their conduct was not rooted in profound comprehension and conviction. Conversely, if the circumstances alter and the individual maintains, "I remain the same," it serves as a testament to their action's alignment with profound understanding and steadfastness.[112]

The absence of regret and repentance in the actions of Imam Ali (peace be upon him)

Leaders wielding power and authority may often make rash decisions. However, upon relinquishing their positions, they can be overcome with regret and seek to rectify their actions. However, an Imam, guided by profound conviction and unwavering faith, need not seek such absolution. Whether an Imam is incarcerated, a ruler, a subordinate, or a superior, their actions are always aligned with righteousness, devoid of remorse. Ali ibn Abi Talib, a paragon of this unwavering conviction, never regretted the twenty-five years he spent confined to his home nor his other actions, as his deeds were rooted in absolute faith and divine enlightenment.

By contrast, those who succumb to selfish impulses and engage in actions driven by fleeting desires often feel regretful once their circumstances change.

Highly elevated by their unwavering faith, Imams and prophets are impervious to regret and remorse. Their actions, rooted in unwavering conviction, remain steadfast regardless of their surroundings. Whether they stand upon the earth or traverse the celestial expanse of seventh heaven, their actions are guided by an unshakeable certainty. Such individuals epitomize the divine testament, their servitude to God unwavering, whether their sustenance consists of barley bread or the fruits of their rulership. Their steadfast devotion to God prevents them from succumbing to the allure of self-aggrandizement, which often leads to moral degradation and regret. This principle holds paramount importance.

اَللّهُمَّ اَذِنْتَ لی فی دُعائِکَ.

O Allah, You have permitted me to call upon You.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said:

إلهی کَفی بی عِزّاً أن اکونَ لَکَ عَبداً، و کَفی بی فَخراً أن تکونَ لی رَبّاً. أنتَ کَما اُحِبُّ، فاجعَلنی کما تُحِبُّ![113]

My glory is enough for me that I am your servant, and my pride is enough for me that you are my Lord. You are as I love, so make me as You love!

O Lord, I am Your servant alone, not the servant of any other. If I were the servant of any other, I would be humiliated. But I am Your servant, and servitude to You brings dignity to a person.

It was widely believed that in previous eras, respect for Ayn al-Dawla's servants surpassed that accorded to the rulers. presidents, and governors of the time. This profound reverence extended to even Ayn al-Dawla's donkeys, reflecting his immense power and influence in Iran's political landscape.

Ayn al-Dawla, the son of Nasser al-Din Shah, resided in Tehran on a street now known as Iran Avenue. He was of considerable stature, known for his cruelty and arrogance, and both captivating and perplexing tales mark his legacy. When Ayn al-Dawla ventured out in public, his slaves would step forward and command the public to "Step aside! Remain unseen!" This directive was intended to instill fear and reverence among the people, who were expected to comply without hesitation As Ayn al-Dawla's authority swelled to the point where even his menial staff commanded more tremendous respect than esteemed officials, the hollowness of his power became starkly evident. Then, someone emerges who willingly surrenders themselves to the Exalted God; Imam Ali's poignant expression encapsulates this sentiment:

الهی کَفی بی عِزّاً أن اکونَ لَکَ عَبداً!

My Lord, the sheer privilege of being Your servant suffices for me! I have never become a servant to anyone, neither wealth, nor women, nor authority, nor desires, nor lust, nor a sense of superiority; I am a slave to none.

Unconventionally, when the world materialized in the guise of a captivating woman and ventured into the garden, presenting herself before Imam Ali (peace be upon him), the Imam struck her with a shovel and issued a solemn proclamation.

قَد طَلَّقتُکِ ثَلاثاً! لا رَجعَةَ لی فیکِ.[114]

Depart, I have dissolved our covenant three times! A woman who thrice divorced cannot be reclaimed.

Thus, Ali can be called "The Trustee of the Believers" and "The Commander of the Believers." The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said in a sound hadith:

و لا تَحِلُّ إمرَةُ المؤمنین بَعدی لِأَحَدٍ غَیرِه.[115]

The title of Amir Al-Mu'minin or "Commander of the Believers" is exclusive to Ali, for he is the leader of all believers. It is not permissible for anyone other than Ali to assume the position of leadership and command over the believers after Ali.

أفَرَءَیتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأضَلَّهُ اللهُ عَلَی عِلمٍ.[116]

Unveiling the true idol and purpose of each individual

Humans revere whatever they hold dear, and that becomes their deity. Thus, numerous Gods exist in this world! Each person must discern the ultimate aspiration and aim within their mind and heart. That becomes their true deity!

Have you witnessed one who has adopted their desire as their God? Allah shall deliberately lead him astray. (Quran 45:23)

آلِهَتُهم بُطونُهم، و نِساؤُهم قِبلَتُهم، و شَرَفُهم الدَّراهِم و الدَّنانیر.[117]

In a prophetic warning about the signs of the end of times, it is stated that people's devotion will shift from God to worldly desires. Their bellies will become their deities, their women their qiblah, and their wealth their honor. These earthly attachments will become their ultimate masters. In a person's heart, anything they place above God will become their God, regardless of what it is.

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) says:

كفى بي فخراً أن تكونَ لي ربّاً!

It is enough pride for me that you are my Lord, and no one else is my Lord.

So now I have two things: pride and glory. Pride comes from being your servant, and glory comes from your being my Lord.

إلهي أنتَ كما أحبّ، فاجعلني كما تُحبّ!

O God, you are as I love, so make me as you love!

Mulla Sadra might write a series of Asfar just pondering this one sentence! He brings unity in diversity and multiplicity in unity that the world's wise men are stuck in explaining. All contemporary schools of thought benefit from his groundbreaking insights, making him a genuinely influential figure.

إلهي أنتَ كما أحبّ.

God, you are as I love you to be.

O God, you embody my deepest affections, the object of my unwavering adoration. Your love has eclipsed all other loves, rendering all friendships, goals, idols, aspirations, and worldly pleasures pale and devoid of allure. You alone reign supreme in my heart, a love so intense that I perceive no other beloved .Therefore, I surrender myself to your divine will, relinquishing my desires and aspirations. I entrust my nafs to your guidance, personality to your shaping, and destiny to your benevolent hands. I am but a sculptor's clay, malleable and subservient to your divine artistry.

I do not seek to be a servant, a scholar, an ascetic, an intercessor, or any specific designation. Instead, I offer myself as a blank canvas, ready to be transformed into whatever form your love dictates. I cast myself into your hands, eagerly awaiting the masterpiece you will mold from my being.

O Lord, I renounce my will and embrace yours, surrendering myself to your divine plan. May your love guide, shape me, and ultimately reveal the true purpose of my existence.

فاجعلني كما تُحبّ.

اللّهمّ صلّ على محمّد و آل محمّد.

So, make me as you love!

Allāhumma salli ʻalā Muḥammadin wa āli Muḥammad; O God, bestow blessings upon Muhammad and his family.

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
و صلى الله على محمد و آله الطاهرين
و لعنة الله على أعدائهم أجمعين من الآن إلى قيام يوم الدين

الحمد لله الذي لم يتخذ صاحبة و لا ولدا و لم يكن له شريك في الملك و لم يكن له ولي من الذل و كبره تكبيرا.[118]

Creation is the manifestation and unveiling of God's essence

Praise is solely due to God, who did not make Himself passive matter (instead, He is pure actuality), and the beings He creates do not exist separate from Him (instead, creation is merely the manifestation and unveiling of His essence, not in the sense of division).

In contrast to the common misconception that created beings are external to God and are brought into existence by His will, it is erroneous to view creation as a process of separation from the divine essence. The term "creation" should be understood as manifesting and unveiling the divine essence in diverse mirrors and reflections.[119]

The reflection in a mirror serves as an apt analogy. When you gaze into a mirror, you witness your reflection, not a distinct entity separated from yourself. It embodies your image, an inseparable manifestation of your being. In the same way, created beings are not external to God's essence. They are simply expressions of God's inherent attributes and powers, unveiled through the creation of the universe. This perspective transcends the notion of creation as a mere act of making and elevates it to a dynamic process of self-disclosure and revelation. It encourages us to perceive the universe not as a separate entity but as an intrinsic manifestation of God's infinite attributes.

و لا ولدا.

The realm of existence is not external to God, nor is His offspring requiring separation and detachment. If creation were to be understood as a manufacturing process, this would entail limiting the Lord and confining creation within the bounds of His existence. This would render God, like created beings, subject to limitation. Given that created beings possess limitations, it is undeniably impossible for God to be bound by such limitations, even if His limits were to be vast and extraordinary and the circumference of His existence expanded infinitely. Instead, God's existence, infinite in intensity, duration, multiplicity, and all aspects, encompasses all created beings. Through the radiance of His oneness and omnipotence, He has enveloped and obliterated all beings within the brilliance of His monotheism.

The interpenetration of God's essence with his creations

Created beings are not separate from God but are fanā (annihilated) in Him.[120] They are like a drop of water that falls into the ocean, dissolves, ceases to exist, and loses all its boundaries. One must not envision a drop standing on top of the sea, isolated from its vastness. Even if this drop is infinitesimally small and the sea encompasses the vastness of oceans, encompassing the entire globe, it remains circumscribed by the boundary of that which lies beyond the drop. And this boundary, regardless of its form or nature, is a consequence of origination, which contradicts the eternality and necessity of existence. Consequently, the divine essence, characterized by originality and necessity, inevitably entails boundless existence. This boundless existence encompasses and pervades all existents, coexisting intimately with them.

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ.[121]

And He is with you wherever you are.

مَا يَكُونُ مِن نَّجْوَىٰ ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَىٰ مِن ذَٰلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا.[122]

There is no gathering of three, but He is the fourth of them, nor five, but He is the sixth of them, nor of fewer than that or more, but He is with them, wherever they are.

When two individuals engage in private discourse, the divine presence is the third party. The divine presence becomes the fourth participant when the three gather in intimate conversation.

Is it God who appears as a being and sits next to them when three people gather to exchange secrets? Does He assume the manifestation of a celestial angel with a physical form, albeit one that remains concealed from our perception? This notion is undeniably flawed, for if He possesses corporeal forms and God exists in a celestial realm with angelic attributes. He, too, is bound by the limitations of a physical form that differs from the two individuals and three who convene for clandestine dialogue. God, however, is not confined in such a manner. He transcends the constraints of physical embodiment. Hence, what does it signify that the fourth individual in a gathering of three engaged in whispered conversation is God? If this were the case, the sixth member of a group of five likewise assumes the divine mantle. Such a notion holds no exclusivity. Every solitary individual engaged in self-conversation becomes the second divine entity, while in a gathering of ten, the eleventh participant embodies God's presence. In this room where we now assemble, the additional individual is God's manifestation, whether our numbers are few or many. In this verdant realm where two trees have taken root, the third tree represents the divine presence, and Mount Abu Qubays' second peak is a testament to God's ubiquity. What does this all imply?

The concept of "unitary by exclusion" in a simple explanation

In Islamic theology, the concept of "unitary by exclusion (واحد بالصرافه) "refers to the unique and unparalleled nature of God's existence. It emphasizes that God is not like any other being and that His unity is absolute and cannot be compared to the unity of numbers.[123]

God's existence encompasses all beings, pervading every particle and existing in proximity with all creation. This does not imply that God becomes one of the beings, like a third person joining a conversation. Instead, it signifies that God's existence is so vast and encompassing that it includes all creation, not vice versa. God's existence is not confined to specific places or times. Unlike numerical units, God is infinite and omnipresent, permeating existence.

داخِلٌ فی الأشیاء لا بِالمُمازَجَة، خارِجٌ عَن الأشیاء لا بِالمُزایَلَة.[124]

Within things, but not mixed; outside of things, but not separate.

The statement "God is within everything" signifies God's omnipresence, meaning God's presence permeates all aspects of existence, from the vast universe to the most minute subatomic particles. However, this does not imply a physical manifestation. It does not mean God occupies space within a cup, for example.

"Outside of everything" does not mean that God is outside in the sense of being separate. If you say that this cup is outside of this container, it is a separate entity; separate means it is not connected. The "outside" that God is from things is not separation. It means that all beings are shadows, attachments, and ties, not that there are beings and they have a connection with God. If this is the case, there must be a God and a being and a connection between the two, and the necessity of this is diversity. Beings are themselves ties, not connections. Nothing remains except the everlasting one existence in all worlds when this happens! All beings are shadows, shadows of God, signs, and indicators.[125]

Unveiling the truth of relational existence and the poverty of beings

When I walk with a stick in my hand, it casts a shadow. Similarly, our existence also casts a shadow. However, is the shadow indeed a being independent of the stick? Does the stick become two? Or does a person who sees their shadow while walking in the sunlight become two? On rare occasions, I notice a person wearing a turban and robe walking beside us, separated by a meter. Is this person two? Additionally, the presence of shadow is contingent upon sunlight. When the sun shines, the shadow exists, and when it sets, the shadow vanishes.

Does our existence multiply just as our shadow accompanies us wherever we go? Is our shadow a faint existence, much weaker than ourselves? However, is it still an "existence"? No, the shadow is nothingness, a mere representation, just like the reflection one sees in a mirror.

Beholding your reflection in the mirror does not introduce duality into the world. The mirror itself remains unaffected by your reflection. It does not become heavy or happy, more or less knowledgeable, or aesthetically pleasing. Remove your face from the mirror; nothing will be left

in it. Nothing! Therefore, the mirror itself is nothing, absolutely nothing! It simply can show, reflect, and mirror. It signifies the refraction of light from objects that come before it. All beings are the shadow of God, and God is the possessor of the shadow. In that blessed verse of the Quran, it is said:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا الشَّمْسَ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا [126]

Have you not seen how your Lord has extended the shadow? And if He had willed, He could have made it stationary. Then, we made the sun a guide to it.

This is a particularly remarkable verse, for this blessed verse imparts a wealth of knowledge to the discerning individual! This "مدّ ظل" (extension of the shadow) signifies that when the sun ascends, it casts a shadow; the sun traverses from one side to the other, while the shadow mirrors its movements. The sun journeys towards the east, and the shadow follows suit, veering towards the west. Conversely, the sun's westward passage prompts the shadow to embark on an eastward journey. When the sun sets, the shadow vanishes entirely. Remarkably, the shadow is not cumbersome; it is perpetually weightless!

As the sun ascends above the horizon, the branches of trees in the spring or summer cast shadows upon the ground, creating a serene and refreshing ambiance. Could one deny the existence of these shadows, claiming them to be mere illusions? If they were unreal, why would one advise someone to seek refuge in the shade to cool off on a scorching day? The shadow's presence is undeniable, but its shadowy nature defines its existence.

The reflection you witness in the mirror is not a fabrication; it is a reflection, nothing more. Similarly, when you visit a photography studio, you capture and purchase an image, but the photograph you acquire lacks substance. It possesses no knowledge or ignorance, virtues or vices, height or depth.

Collecting a thousand photographs would not amplify or diminish your existence; filling an entire room with photographs would not add a single iota of essence to your being. Photographs are mere representations akin to shadows that point towards a deeper reality. In the face of the Divine, all beings, including these shadows and reflections, are utterly insignificant, like grains of sand against an infinite expanse. If I uttered "nothing" and you repeated it until the Day of Judgment, there would still be ample room to exclaim "nothing" further.

As we gather here, I would like to recite a poem by the esteemed Saadi Shirazi. On one occasion, during the same days that Ayatollah Tabatabaei (may God have mercy on him) was traveling from Qum to meet Henry Corbin, he visited our home in Waliabad and enjoyed lunch with us. Following an engaging conversation, he shared these verses with us and remarked: These verses are dedicated to Saadi, and the following discussion will revolve around Saadi's literary masterpiece.

ره عقل جز پیچ بر پیچ نیست
بر عارفان جز خدا هیچ نیست.

Reason's path, a winding maze,
Seeking truths in endless haze.
But mystics' hearts, a brighter glow,
In God's embrace, they find their flow.

He says: The path of human reason is winding and convoluted. Reason dictates that this being exists. How can humanity deny its existence? If this being is identified as God, then the assertion is incorrect. Alternatively, if this being is subsumed within God, then why is it not visible to us?

ره عقل جز پیچ بر پیچ نیست   بر عارفان جز خدا هیچ نیست
توان گفتن این با حق شناس   ولی خرده گیرند اهل قیاس

Those who possess truth's discerning eye,
They will understand the words we try.
But logic's slaves, with narrow minds,
Will find fault in what we find.

A truth-seeker can make this assertion; however, those who rely on reasoning, minor and major premises, and other methods to deduce God's existence from contingent beings find fault with it.

که پس آسمان و زمین چیستند؟
بنی آدم و دام ودد کیستند؟
بله هرچه هستند ازان برترند
که با هستیش نام هستی برند
بزرگ است پیش تو دریا به موج
بلندست خورشید تابان به اوج
ولی اهل صورت کجا پی برند
که ارباب معنی به ملکی درند
که گر آفتاب است یک ذره نیست
وگر هفت دریاست یک قطره نیست
چو سلطان عزت علم بر کشد
جهان سر به جیب عدم درکشد.[127]

In realms of form, the world may seem grand,
With suns ablaze and seas that expand.
But those of meaning, with hearts ablaze,
Know true existence in a higher haze.
For suns are grains, and seas mere drops,
When knowledge's Sultan His light unlocks.
hen vanishes this world, grand and vast,
In nothingness's embrace, forever amassed.

The masters of insight and the mystics dwell in a realm where they perceive seven seas and seven suns as mere drops and speckles before the Lord's grandeur.

With its vast and intricate array of phenomena, the entire universe sprang forth from a single divine gaze. If the Creator withdrew this gaze, the universe would instantly dissolve into nothingness.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ ٱلظِّلَّ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُۥ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا ٱلشَّمْسَ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا * ثُمَّ قَبَضْنَـٰهُ إِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَسِيرًا.[128]

All existence emanates from God's essence and is sustained by His divine breath. If God withdraws His presence, the universe will cease to exist, leaving behind an empty void.[129]

What utterances do various entities make in the presence of a divine being? How do we humans, who often view ourselves as the most intelligent, noble, and accomplished of all creations, respond? Our self-assuredness can be so profound that we figuratively wish to shake the very foundations of the Earth. We fail to recognize that this very power originates from the divine itself.

In Quran, it is said:

أَمَّنْ هَـٰذَا ٱلَّذِي هُوَ جُندٌ لَّكُمْ يَنصُرُكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنِ إِنِ ٱلْكَـٰفِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ.[130]

Who is your host who may help you besides the Most Merciful? Indeed, the disbelievers are only in delusion.

Even the armies that you command and defeat are from God. We are shadows of God's existence, and no matter how much we know or do not know, we cannot deny our dependence on God.

Saadi's poetry, though imbued with mystical insights, lacks nuance. While he paints vivid pictures of the divine realm, the truth he conveys is even more profound and expansive. For instance, he describes a domain where the sun is reduced to a mere speck, and even seven seas are insignificant. These metaphors bridge the gap between human comprehension and the ineffable essence of reality.

I love the whole world because the entire world is from him

The late Qāḍī (may God have mercy on him) used to say that in all of these books by Sa'di, there is one good poem, and that poem is this:

به جهان خرّم از آنم که جهان خرم از اوست
عاشقم بر همه عالم، که همه عالم از اوست

I find joy in the world, for His love fills the sky.
I love the world with all my heart, for His presence makes it bright.
The world reflects His beauty, His grace, and His might.
I am in love with every corner, every sight.
From the mountains to the valleys, from the oceans to the sun,
His love shines through, a radiant dawn.
I am grateful for His creation, for the world that surrounds,
A testament to His love, a story that resounds.
I am happy in the world because His love fills the air,
And I love the world with all my heart, for it is His care.

Consequently, every manifestation of affection, whether it be the love of a lover for a beloved or the praise of a praiser for the praised, is inherently rooted in the essence of the divine. The very selves of the lover and the beloved, the essence of love itself, the identity of the praiser and the praised, and the very term "praise" are reflections of the Supreme Being.

A tale of the late Mr. Sayyid Jamaluddin Gulpayigani

Sayyid Jamaluddin Gulpayigani, may God have mercy on him, said: I had a student who had reached a good state. One day, he came to the door of my house and said, "Peace be upon you, O Absolute Saint of God!" I said, "Don't say that!" He said, "Master, wherever I look, I see Sayyid Jamal! I look at the door; I see that it is not a door; it is Sayyid Jamal. I look at the wall; I see Sayyid Jamal. I went to the shrine; I saw Sayyid Jamal. I study, I see Sayyid Jamal. Sayyid Jamal is present in all beings."

Tonight marks the seventeenth night of Ramadan. Do you know the significance of this night? It was the night when Prophet Muhammad, Ali, and the rest of the companions gathered for the Battle of Badr. The next day, the Battle of Badr commenced, and the Muslims emerged victorious. Ali (peace be upon him) once remarked, "From that night of Badr until the end of my life, I would dedicate the seventeenth nights to acts of worship, seeking blessings from the victories granted by Allah on the Day of Badr." It is a night of immense importance! Did you know that Ali was given the dhikr "هو " during the Battle of Badr? This hadith is related to Surat al-Qadr, also mentioned by Shayk Ṭabarsī in his Quranic interpretation under Surat al-Ikhlas.

Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) said: I saw the prophet Khidr in a dream on the night of Badr and said to him, 'Teach me a prayer that I may recite and be victorious over my enemies.'

علّمني دُعاءً

The prophet Khidr said: Recite the following dhikr.

يا هو، يا مَن لا هو إلاّ هو، يا هو، يا مَن لا هو إلاّ هو.

O He, O He who is none but He, O He, O He who is none but He.

On that day of Badr, I took up my sword and fought with those words. I told this dream to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and he said, "You have been taught the Greatest Name."[131]

Some say that the words "O He" and "None but He" are Sufi invocations and have not been mentioned in the Shari'ah. These people are mistaken. The narration is sound, both from the Shi'a and Sunni sources. Evidence of this is found in the book Majma' al-Bayan and other places.

اللهمّ صلِّ على محمّد و آل محمّد.

O God, bestow blessings upon Muhammad and his family.

الحَمدُ لِلّهِ بِجَميعِ مَحامِدِهِ كُلِّها عَلى جَميعِ نِعَمِهِ كُلِّها. الحَمدُ لِلّهِ الَّذي لا مُضادَّ لَهُ في مُلكِهِ و لا مُنازِعَ لَهُ في أمرِهِ. الحَمدُ لِلّهِ الَّذي لا شَريكَ لَهُ في خَلقِهِ و لا شَبيهَ لَهُ في عَظَمَتِهِ. الحَمدُ لِلّهِ الفاشي في الخَلقِ أمرُهُ و حَمدُهُ، الظّاهِرِ بِالكَرَمِ مَجدُهُ، الباسِطِ بِالجودِ يَدَهُ الَّذي لا تَنقُصُ خَزائِنُهُ و لا يَزيدُهُ كَثرَةُ العَطاءِ إلاّ جوداً و كَرَماً، إنَّهُ هوَ العَزيزُ الوَهّابُ.[132]

Immense praise and gratitude are reserved for the eternal essence, the fount of all blessings. All exaltation belongs to the Lord, whose dominion and sovereignty have no peers and whose will and decree are without a rival. And praise is for the God, who stands alone in creation, whose grandeur and majesty transcend human comprehension. All praise belongs to God, whose will permeates the universe of creation and whose benevolent essence infuses every corner of existence. His greatness manifests in the endless generosity and abundance He bestows upon all creation. His hand of generosity and bestowal extends to every realm of existence. The repositories of His mercy are ever-flowing, and the abundance of His giving and outpour of grace only magnify His blessing and bounty. Indeed, He is the Possessor of majesty and the exclusive possessor of generosity and bestowal.

اللّهُمَّ إنّي أسألُكَ قَليلاً مِن كَثيرٍ مَعَ حاجَةٍ بي إلَيهِ عَظيمَةٍ، و غِناكَ عَنهُ قَديمٌ، و هوَ عِندي كَثيرٌ، و هوَ عَلَيكَ سَهلٌ يَسيرٌ.

O Lord, I seek from You a mere fraction of the boundless ocean of Your grace despite my profound need for it. You remain eternally self-sufficient, while this matter holds immense value for me. To grant this is a simple task for You.

اللّهُمَّ إنَّ عَفوَكَ عَن ذَنبي و تَجاوُزَكَ عَن خَطيئَتي و صَفحَكَ عَن ظُلمي و سَترَكَ عَلى قَبيحِ عَمَلي و حِلمَكَ عَن كَثيرِ جُرمي عِندَ ما كانَ مِن خَطَئي و عَمدي، أطمَعَني في أن أسألَكَ ما لا أستَوجِبُهُ مِنكَ، الَّذي رَزَقتَني مِن رَحمَتِكَ و أرَيتَني مِن قُدرَتِكَ و عَرَّفتَني مِن إجابَتِكَ؛ فَصِرتُ أدعوكَ آمِناً و أسألُكَ مُستَأنِساً، لا خائِفاً و لا وَجِلاً، مُدِلّاً عَلَيكَ فيما قَصَدتُ فيهِ إلَيكَ. فَإن أبطَأَ عَنّي عَتَبتُ بِجَهلي عَلَيكَ، و لَعَلَّ الَّذي أبطَأَ عَنّي هوَ خَيرٌ لي، لِعِلمِكَ بِعاقِبَةِ الأُمورِ. فَلَم أرَ مَولىً كَريماً أصبَرَ عَلى عَبدٍ لَئيمٍ مِنكَ عَلَيَّ!

O Lord, Your compassionate forgiveness for my sins, Your gracious overlooking of my shortcomings, Your merciful pardon for my transgressions, Your benevolent concealment of my missteps, and Your enduring patience with my misdeeds, both unintentional and intentional, encourage me to petition You for a favor and grace that I have never truly earned. I yearn to be bestowed with a morsel of Your boundless compassion, to witness firsthand Your omnipotent dominion over the universe's decrees and events, and to recognize that you have revealed Yourself to me through the grant of my prayers and the fulfillment of my requests. Therefore, I approach You with an unwavering sense of serenity, devoid of trepidation or apprehension. You are my constant companion and confidant, and I make my requests to You without hesitation or fear. My connection with You has deepened, so I boldly and courageously seek guidance and fulfillment from You, unwavering in pursuing my path and destination.

Yet, if You delay the fulfillment of my desires due to my ignorance and heedlessness, I shall not hesitate to question and criticize myself. Yet perhaps the delay in realizing my needs is ordained by Your wisdom and benevolence, for You alone comprehend the outcome of my endeavors and the culmination of my affairs. Therefore, I have never encountered a Lord as generous as You, who exhibits such remarkable patience and forbearance towards a servant as imperfect and unworthy as I am.

يا رَبِّ، إنَّكَ تَدعوني فَأُوَلّي عَنكَ، و تَتَحَبَّبُ إلَيَّ فَأتَبَغَّضُ إلَيكَ، و تَتَوَدَّدُ إلَيَّ فَلا أقبَلُ مِنكَ، كَأنَّ لِيَ التَّطَوُّلَ عَلَيكَ، و لَم يَمنَعكَ ذلِكَ مِنَ الرَّحمَةِ لي و الإحسانِ إلَيَّ و التَّفَضُّلِ عَلَيَّ بِجودِكَ و كَرَمِكَ؛ فَارحَم عَبدَكَ الجاهِلَ و جُد عَلَيهِ بِفَضلِ إحسانِكَ! إنَّكَ جَوادٌ كَريمٌ.

O my Lord, You extend Your call to me, yet I turn away. You shower me with Your love, yet I respond with harshness and disdain. You open the door to friendship and familiarity, yet I remain distant. It is as if I have a right to Your attention and behave arrogantly towards You!

Yet, this does not diminish Your outpouring of mercy and kindness upon me. Your generosity and grace continue to flow, even in the face of my shortcomings. You are never stingy with Your gifts and blessings. Therefore, have mercy on Your ignorant servant, and bestow upon him Your grace and kindness! Your generosity and grace are Your exclusive attributes.

الحَمدُ لِلّهِ مالِكِ المُلكِ مُجرى الفُلكِ مُسَخِّرِ الرِّياحِ فالِقِ الإصباحِ دَيّانِ الدّينِ، رَبِّ العالَمين.[133]

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, the Maker of the Angels and the Spirit. He has dominion over everything and is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All praise and gratitude be to God, the sovereign of all creation, whose dominion and authority over the universe are absolute and unparalleled. He is the One who sets the vast ships in motion across the expansive seas and harnesses the mighty winds to His divine will. He is the One who dispels the darkness of night with the radiant glow of dawn, ushering in a new day filled with His boundless blessings. He is the One to whom all divine law and guidance belong, the source of all righteousness and morality. He is the benevolent Lord and Sustainer of all existence, providing for and protecting His creation with unwavering love and compassion.

أعوذُ باللهِ مِنَ الشَّيطانِ الرَّجيم
بِسمِ اللهِ الرَّحمٰنِ الرَّحيم
و صلَّى اللهُ علىٰ محمَّد و آلهِ الطّاهرين
و لعنةُ اللهِ علىٰ أعدائِهِم أجمَعينَ.

الحَمدُ لِلّهِ علىٰ حِلمِهِ بَعدَ عِلمِهِ، و الحَمدُ لِلّهِ علىٰ عَفوِهِ بَعدَ قُدرَتِهِ، و الحَمدُ لِلّهِ علىٰ طولِ أناتِهِ فی غَضَبِهِ و هو قادِرٌ علىٰ ما يُريد.[134]

Immense praise and adoration are reserved solely for God, the Most Patient, even in the face of His Omniscience. Despite His encompassing knowledge, He manifests patience and al-Ḥalīm (the One Who does not react out of anger to disobedience, nor is He hasty in punishing). He bestows forgiveness and mercy despite His supreme power. Praise is due to God alone, for His unwavering patience and forbearance amidst His righteous anger, even as He possesses the power to do whatever He wills.

The incongruence of knowledge and patience among those who seek outward knowledge

In general, it is exceptionally challenging to blend knowledge with patience seamlessly. In other words, it is uncommon to encounter an individual who embodies both intellectual prowess and the hallmark of restraint. This is because the sheer abundance of knowledge and the accompanying surge of wisdom in a given subject often hinder their ability to pause and contemplate the ignorance they encounter and confront. Instead, their immediate inclination is to challenge and eradicate that ignorance vehemently.

The exceptional scientific grounding and action guided by divine contentment are two hallmarks of physicians of yore

In the bygone era, individuals embarked on a similar educational trajectory as the clergy, dedicating their studies to pursuing enlightenment until they attained perfection. At this juncture, they made one of three life-defining choices: some ventured into teaching and disseminating the pillars of faith, embracing the clergy's noble calling, and embarking on the path of ijtihad, or independent legal reasoning. Others chose to dedicate themselves to the noble profession of medicine, striving to alleviate suffering and safeguard the well-being of humanity. Yet, those driven solely by the pursuit of material gain and lacking the aptitude for intellectual pursuits typically opted for the less demanding vocation of bookselling.

Physicians of the old days dedicated themselves to rigorous study and comprehending the essence of their knowledge. They immersed themselves in masterpieces like Avicenna's Qurābādīn Kabīr (Canon of Medicine and Pharmacy), Tashrīḥ al-A'ḍā' (Anatomy of the Organ), Tuḥfa Ḥakīm Mū'min, Khamsah Yūnānī, and other esteemed medical treatises. Their arduous endeavors transformed them into erudite, insightful, and discerning practitioners. Their motivation stemmed not from personal gain but from a profound desire to serve others and fulfill the divine purpose of medicine.

While we did not experience that time ourselves, our parents, mothers, and relatives recounted the tales of those remarkable individuals. My father recounted: During the cholera and famine that plagued Tehran, a physician named Hakim Sokrates resided near SarCheshmeh, accompanied by his faithful donkey. Mounting his steed, he embarked on his selfless mission to tend to the ailing who could not seek counsel. One day, as we were abed with illness, he arrived at our doorstep near sunset, declaring: Honorable sir, since dawn, I have personally visited ninety-eight patients, some of whom hover precariously on the brink of demise. With divine providence, all shall recover!

They rendered their medical expertise without hesitation, earning a humble two-qiran gratuity. If unable to afford it, the physicians would compassionately waive their fee, even extending the kindness to provide destitute patients with the funds necessary for their medications. Some even offered sustenance to those in need.

My father concluded, 'These physicians were embodiments of piety and compassion, genuinely devoted to the well-being of others, sparing no effort to alleviate suffering'.

These physicians were highly specialized. They would assess your pulse and tell you: 'You have measles, tuberculosis, typhoid fever, sciatica, kidney failure, or any other ailment.' They claim that the pulse manifests in thirty-two distinct patterns! By examining your pulse, they would diagnose your illness. If they needed further confirmation, they would examine your eyes or lower your eyelids. If they required even greater precision, they would inspect your tongue. Physicians did not perform invasive procedures, such as using a stethoscope to examine your stomach or heart. They would not delve into such depths as the ailment had already been identified! These examinations were conducted exclusively on men. Women were only subjected to pulse examinations. No physician would ever inspect a woman's throat or eyes.

A man of profound wisdom, Nāẓim al-Aṭṭibā', the father of Dr. Nafīsī, penned a notable text on medicine and another on linguistics, aptly titled Farhang Nafīsī. Tales of his humble practice abound, where a sheepskin cushioned the ground before him, accompanied by a Quran stand rather than a chair or sofa. As patients trickled in, he diligently examined them and immersed himself in the holy verses without visitors. A curtain divided the space, where men entered from one side, and he would scrutinize their hands or tongues, prescribing remedies accordingly. Women would discreetly extend their hands from behind the partition, revealing their palms, upon which he would assess their pulses and formulate prescriptions. Miraculously, all who sought his guidance recovered from their ailments.

Numerous narrations state that a scholar harmonizes patience with his knowledge. Many attest that those who possess knowledge of God are those whose patience and tolerance expand proportionately with the growth of their knowledge. It is not the case that knowledge increases while patience remains stagnant, leading to a disdainful gaze upon all creation. Instead, they speak ill of everyone, becoming enraged and aggressive. Such individuals are not true scholars! [135]

In his sermon to Hamam, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (peace be upon him) emphasizes that true piety is a blend of knowledge and patience. He states that the pious integrate patience into their pursuit of knowledge.

يَمْزُجُ الحِلْمَ بِالعِلْمِ.

This implies that true righteousness is not merely about acquiring knowledge but also about cultivating patience and self-control.[136]

الحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى حِلْمِهِ بَعْدَ عِلْمِهِ.

Gratitude be to God for His forbearance that follows His omniscience.

This expression conveys profound appreciation for God's unwavering patience in the face of human shortcomings. Despite encompassing all knowledge, including humanity's transgressions and misdeeds, God exercises immense forbearance, refraining from immediate retribution.

العَجَلَةُ مِنَ الشَّيطانِ.[137]

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said: Haste is from Satan.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) advised against haste, stating that it is a trait of the devil. Haste is a negative quality that should be avoided. He distinguished between haste and speed, emphasizing that speed is a positive quality when used appropriately, while haste is detrimental. Speed refers to acting diligently when the situation calls for it. Haste, however, involves acting hurriedly and without careful consideration, which can lead to mistakes and oversights.

In Quran we have:

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.[138]

And hasten towards forgiveness from your Lord and a garden whose width is as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the righteous.

Hasten denotes proactivity and diligence, not impulsiveness or recklessness. It implies taking decisive action without unnecessary delay while maintaining a measured approach that considers potential repercussions.

Individuals with sole academic knowledge may resort to hasty pronouncements, judgments, and opinions. Their proficiency in the subject matter often precludes the exercise of patience and deliberation in their decision-making processes. When confronted with two individuals seeking guidance, they hastily render judgments, potentially jeopardizing the accuracy of their verdicts.

الجَوادُ قد يَكبو و الصّارِمُ قد يَنبو.[139]

The swift horse may stumble, and the sharp sword may dull.

This proverb reminds us that even the most capable people can make mistakes. We must be cautious and deliberate in our actions, even when confident in our abilities.

A hallmark of a competent judge is their ability to exercise restraint and avoid hasty decisions.[140] When adjudicating disputes, judges must diligently scrutinize the arguments presented by both parties, carefully considering the nuances of each claim. This process demands patience and impartiality, ensuring that judgments are rendered equitably and devoid of prejudicial tendencies.

God is characterized by an immense forbearance, even in the face of His omniscience. While His knowledge alone would justify punishment, God's forbearance is a testament to His boundless mercy and compassion. Even though He is aware of His servants' transgressions, He refrains from immediate retribution, granting them the opportunity to repent and return to Him. God's knowledge is self-sufficient, rendering His forbearance a voluntary act of benevolence. Divine knowledge is the foundation for righteous judgment; however, God transcends the need for immediate punishment, opting for a path that prioritizes redemption and forgiveness.

There is a contrast between God, the all-knowing master, and His servants, who occupy a subservient role. Despite their inherent shortcomings, servants are not absolved of their obligations; divine law dictates that their disobedience warrants punishment.

Despite possessing complete knowledge of His servants' transgressions, God refrains from imposing immediate sanctions. Instead, He patiently awaits their voluntary return to the righteous path, granting them the opportunity to seek forgiveness and rectify their mistakes. Hence, the convergence of forbearance with knowledge is a hallmark of God, the prophets, and the saints. Knowledge alone does not guarantee forbearance, as not every erudite individual embodies this virtue.

The incongruity of power with forgiveness and clemency in the realm of humanity

و الحَمدُ لِلّهِ علىٰ عَفوِهِ بعدَ قُدرَتِه.

And all praise is due to God for His forgiveness that transcends His power. Praise is exclusively reserved for God, who forgives even in the face of His power.

Individuals with power often tend to lack leniency or forgiveness. For instance, a thief enters someone's residence, and people urge, "Capture the thief!" The search ensues, and the thief is apprehended and brought before the homeowner. Should the homeowner lack authority, they might engage in a verbal altercation, even slapping the thief, questioning their act of theft. However, if they hold a position of authority, such as a sultan, with the power to adjudicate, they might command, "Torture him! A thief trespassed into my home and stole!" Such was the practice in the past, where thieves were subjected to dismemberment.

It is said that during the time of the late Haj Shaykh Hassanali Esfahani, who resided in Mashhad and frequently visited a village in Mashhad named Nokhudak, he became widely known as Hajj Shaykh Hassanali Nukhūdakī. However, his origins were in Isfahan, not Mashhad. One day, one of the princes, Ayn al-Dawla, who governed Isfahan, had one or two of his valuable carpets stolen. They sought the assistance of Shaykh Hassanali, a man of devotion, prayer, and esoteric knowledge, to locate the perpetrator of this theft. Shaykh Hassanali stated, "I shall not reveal the identity of the thief, but I can ensure that the stolen carpets will be returned

to their rightful owner." The princes protested, "By no means! We implore you to identify the thief"! Shaykh Hassanali replied firmly, "It is impossible". Upon Shaykh Hassanali's insistence, the princes requested, "Please instruct the thief to return the carpets". After a brief period, the carpets miraculously appeared in their original place – it is unclear how they were restored.

Ayn al-Dawla, witnessing Shaykh Hassanali's extraordinary capabilities, demanded, "Identify the thief"! Shaykh remained steadfast, "I refuse to do so". Enraged by the Shaykh's refusal, Ayn al-Dawla turned to his subordinates and commanded, "Bring the Shaykh under the whip[141]"! Shaykh Hassanali and a group of dignitaries were then subjected to this punishment. However, as the lashes were about to land, Shaykh exerted his inner power, causing the hands of the executioners to halt. Simultaneously, Ayn al-Dawla experienced a severe heart ailment. The princes, overwhelmed with shame, apologized profusely. Shaykh Hassanali, feeling unsafe, immediately departed for Mashhad, vowing to never again engage in retrieving stolen property. He feared that identifying the thief would result in an injustice, as the law of Sharia requires four righteous witnesses to confirm the identity of a thief before enacting punishment. In this instance, the identification would be based on Shaykh Hassanali's esoteric knowledge, not eyewitness testimony. Moreover, condemning the thief without proper legal procedures would be a grave miscarriage of justice.

The actual manifestation of power lies in self-discipline and conquering oneself

Not all-powerful individuals are inherently forgiving or quick to punish. However, the actual manifestation of power lies in exercising self-discipline and conquering one's desires. This quality is far more valuable and profound than any other power.

Amir al-Mu'minin was a celebrated military leader renowned for his courage and bravery. However, his most defining characteristic was his remarkable self-discipline. Even in the throes of battle, he maintained unwavering control over his emotions and desires.

This ability to control oneself is the essence of true power. It allows us to wield our power responsibly and ethically, ensuring it serves a noble purpose. Without self-discipline, we become susceptible to our baser instincts, leading to reckless and harmful actions.

The actual manifestation of power is not about wielding authority or inflicting pain. It is about cultivating inner strength and harnessing our abilities to improve ourselves and the world.

The self-control of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) in the face of power

After the death of the Prophet, Imam Ali sheathed his sword. This act of bravery on the part of Imam Ali is even greater than his feat of breaking down the gate of Khaybar and killing Amr ibn Abdawud. True courage is shown when one has the power to do something but chooses not to do it out of a sense of duty or principle. In this case, Imam Ali had the power to take over the caliphate by force, but he chose not to do so because he knew that it would go against the wishes of God and the Prophet.

Forgiveness requires a person to exercise self-restraint, even when they have the power to retaliate. This can be incredibly challenging when the person who has wronged you is within your grasp.

In the first scenario, the wrongdoer is seeking forgiveness. The wronged person chooses to extend forgiveness by recognizing they have no means of retribution. In the second scenario, the wrongdoer is entirely at the mercy of the wronged person. The wronged person could easily exact revenge, but instead, they opt for forgiveness. This form of forgiveness demands more extraordinary selflessness as it necessitates setting aside personal grievances and acknowledging the wrongdoer's potential for change.

الحمدُ لِلّهِ علىٰ عفوِهِ بعدَ قُدرتِه.

Praise be to God for His forgiveness after His power.

God's patience and forbearance in anger

و الحمدُ لِلّهِ علىٰ طولِ أناتِهِ فی غَضبِه.

Praise be to God for His long and enduring patience, even in His anger.

He is angry, and He has every right to be angry because the act that has been committed is a wicked act that does not deserve mercy but punishment. However, He is patient and gives

respite. He continues to provide respite until there is no longer any possibility of repentance for the rebellious person.

فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَخْذَ عَزِيزٍ مُقْتَدِرٍ.[142]

So, We seized them with the seizure of a powerful, capable one.

He is grasped by God's Hand, and this power of the Lord is uncanny; in His wrath, He commands, "Stay"!

Patience manifests as a person harnessing their anger, even while seething with fury, to grant an unexpected reprieve to their adversary while still maintaining a state of intense exasperation. However, if one's temperament dissipates, and only then does respite materialize, the individual's transformation has occurred.

The immutability of God's nature ensures that His wrath does not spontaneously transform into mercy except in response to the repenter's return. However, God's enduring wrath persists if the individual persists in their unrepentant state. While God's wrath remains, He refrains from immediate retribution, granting the transgressor ample opportunity for redemption.

In contrast to the impulsive nature of human anger, its execution often requires the passage of time. For instance, if a person has been murdered, the victim's heir seeking retribution against the killer cannot immediately execute them. Instead, they must present their case to a sovereign authority to decide. The heir cannot act until the ruling has been issued. This process may be delayed due to the need for investigation or the absence of witnesses, potentially rendering the heir's case unproven.

Unlike humans, God is not bound by temporal constraints, spatial limitations, or the need for specific circumstances to enact His retribution. His will alone is sufficient to bring about justice, regardless of the passage of time, the availability of a suitable location, or the presence of predetermined conditions. God's omnipotence transcends these limitations, and His will is the ultimate arbiter of justice.

وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ.

Should the Exalted God desire to exact retribution for the injustices perpetrated by humanity, no sentient being would persist upon the terrestrial plane.

وَلَكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى.[143]

But He defers them to a specified term.

Despite the pervasiveness of injustice in humanity, God does not resort to vengeance or subjugation.

The true meaning of the creatorship and providership of the true God

الحمدُ للّه خالقِ الخَلق، باسطِ الرِّزق، فالقِ الإصباح، ذی الجلالِ و الإکرامِ و الفَضلِ و الإنعام، الّذی بَعُدَ فلا یُری، و قَرُبَ فشَهِدَ النَّجوی، تبارک و تعالی![144]

Abundant praise be to God, the Creator of all beings, the Provider of sustenance, the One who splits the dawn, the Possessor of majesty and honor, grace and goodwill, the One who is remote yet ever-present, the One who witnesses every thought and whisper. How holy and high is He!

Praise is uniquely and exclusively reserved for God, the "Creator of Creation." Creation encompasses the entire framework of existence, encompassing both the material world and the ethereal realm. This implies that every entity, from the smallest to the grandest, is considered God's creation.

باسط الرِّزق.

The Expander of Sustenance: He expands sustenance (spreads the table) and does not withhold.

The divine table of sustenance is so extraordinary that it caters to the unique needs of every being. It is akin to hosting a banquet where every hundred guests receive a personalized dish tailored to their preferences. This culinary metaphor highlights the boundless abundance and diversity of God's provisions. The Divine Provider of sustenance has meticulously allocated a particular provision for every creature He has brought into existence. Just as a mother's milk is uniquely designed to nourish her child, God has ordained a perfectly tailored provision for each being.

A profound wisdom underpins God's provision for His creation. He can discern the unique needs of each creature, whether it be a human, an animal, an inanimate object, or even a creature that dwells beneath the ocean's depths. He not only understands the physical needs of each creature but also recognizes the spiritual and intellectual sustenance that each requires. Just as humans nourish their bodies and minds, God sustains the soul. The divine banquet of sustenance is as expansive as the vast array of God's creation. Every entity, from the tiniest insect to the celestial beings, partakes from this boundless table of provision.

The omnipresence of God's provision extends to every corner of the universe. As part of an interconnected web of existence, all living things are bound together by their dependence on the divine source of nourishment. Humankind's efforts to supplant God as the sole provider are inherently vain. Only God, with His boundless wisdom and might, can orchestrate the intricate balance of sustenance for all living beings.

A tale of generosity and humility: the prophet Solomon's banquet

It is said that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), renowned for his wisdom and compassion, resolved to provide for the nourishment of all the servants, attendants, and people of the city and tribe he was in, encompassing animals, livestock, cattle, sheep, horses, and every living creature under their care. They diligently prepared a vast array of culinary delicacies to satisfy the appetites of this diverse gathering.

As the sun approached its zenith and the time to distribute the feast drew near, a fish residing in the port where the Prophet Solomon was residing surfaced, its mouth agape, and issued a resounding demand: I crave sustenance.[145]

The astonished attendants, overwhelmed by the audacity of this aquatic request, presented the entirety of the prepared food to the greedy fish. They poured the provisions into its gaping maw, but its hunger remained unsated.

With disbelief and exasperation, they inquired, "O fish, do you not blush with shame? You have consumed the entire bounty intended for this village, city, and tribe, yet your hunger persists. Are you not content"? The fish, exuding an air of nonchalance, retorted, "This was merely half of my fill, for I harbor two and a half portions still awaiting consumption".

The Exalted God desired to display His immense power and authority by utilizing one of the tiniest creatures dwelling in the vast expanse of the ocean. This act was a testament to His omnipotence, proving He can perform extraordinary feats even with the most minor means.

These colossal fish are said to be able to effortlessly topple massive ships, shred metal with their powerful jaws, and even hinder the movement of entire cities. Their formidable presence is a profound reminder of God's boundless power and majestic nature.

The fish that swallowed Prophet Jonah was small yet exhibited remarkable strength. It was capable of accommodating a human being in its expansive maw. This occurrence highlights that even the smallest creatures can be imbued with noteworthy power under God's divine command.

The vast expanse of the ocean teems with an abundance of life, including creatures capable of astounding feats of strength and resilience. These denizens of the deep serve as tangible manifestations of God's boundless power and majesty, reminding us of the sheer magnitude of His creation.

The ocean itself is a minuscule fragment compared to the vastness of the cosmos, harboring a myriad of galaxies and stars that stretch into the infinite expanse. Similarly, the entirety of the natural world pales compared to the grandeur of other realms and dimensions.

Yet, amidst this cosmic panorama, every creature within this intricate web of life relies on sustenance, a testament to God's unwavering care and provision. Gabriel, the archangel of revelation, Israfil, the harbinger of judgment, and Michael, the celestial protector, ensure that God's creations receive the nourishment they need.

God's bountiful provision: A symbol of generosity and compassion

باسط الرزق.
"Basit ar-Razzaq" refers to God's infinite generosity and compassion. It signifies that God is the ultimate Provider, always ready to extend His blessings to His creation.

Wisdom in the creation of human beings

God has endowed the child in the mother's womb with a specific diet. This nourishment is supplied through the umbilical cord, facilitating the transfer of nutrients and blood from the mother to the child for growth. For nine months, the child resides within the mother's womb, its heart beating steadily but refraining from breathing. This is because the absence of air in the womb prohibits breathing. However, the moment the child emerges from the womb, its nourishment transforms into air, requiring external air for survival. A minute without breathing spells the child's demise. This paradoxical phenomenon raises a perplexing question: If the child was just moments ago in the womb, an environment devoid of oxygen, why did it not succumb to asphyxia? Why was it not gasping for air? The answer lies in the child's ability to adapt to its environment.

Like a fish whose existence hinges on water, the child thrives within the womb, utilizing an alternative means of respiratory support. Yet, once the umbilical cord is severed and the child enters an air-filled environment, it must transition to independent breathing to sustain itself. This adaptation emphasizes the profound wisdom inherent in human creation. God has masterfully designed the child's physiology, enabling it to survive in the womb without breathing and seamlessly transition to external respiration upon birth. The lungs, crucial for gas exchange, are not fully developed at birth. Exposure to air triggers lung development, and the child commences independent breathing to acquire the oxygen necessary for survival.

The transformation of mother's blood into mother's milk: a divine miracle

In the womb, the child receives nourishment from the mother's blood through the umbilical cord. The blood carries essential nutrients and oxygen to support the child's growth and development. Upon birth, the child's diet undergoes a remarkable transformation. The same blood that once sustained the child in the womb is converted into breast milk, the primary source of nourishment for the newborn. This transformation from blood into milk is a testament to God's infinite wisdom and power. It highlights His ability to coordinate the intricate processes of life, seamlessly shifting the child's nourishment from one form to another. Blood and milk, though distinct in their composition and functions, share a common purpose: to sustain and nurture a child's life. Blood sustains the womb, while milk nourishes the child in the external world.

The significance of menstruation

Menstruation is a natural biological process that plays a crucial role in a woman's reproductive health. It signifies fertility and indicates that a woman can conceive and carry a child. Each organ in the human body serves a specific purpose. The eyes perceive light, the ears detect sound, the hands grasp objects, and the womb nurtures life. Creating a human being is remarkable, and the womb facilitates this process. During menstruation, a woman sheds the inner lining of her uterus, preparing it for a potential pregnancy. This menstrual blood differs from the blood that nourishes a fetus or produces milk. Instead, it plays a crucial role in maintaining the health of the uterus and ensuring its readiness for future pregnancies. Menstruation stops when a woman becomes pregnant as the body prioritizes the developing fetus. Additionally, when a woman breastfeeds, the nutrients from the blood are repurposed to produce breast milk, the primary source of nourishment for the infant.

Therefore, menstruation serves a dual purpose: it cleanses and prepares the uterus for pregnancy and nourishes the developing fetus or nursing infant. It is a testament to the intricate workings of the female reproductive system and women's remarkable ability to nurture new life.

Milk is widely regarded as the preeminent source of nutrition. It offers unparalleled strength, health, and digestibility, making it suitable for all ages, from children to older adults. The delicate liquid of milk is the very substance that fortifies the human body with resilient bones. This seemingly contradictory transformation stresses the astonishing efficacy of milk as a dietary cornerstone.

Mother's milk flows from the nipple so consistently that it does not drip and obstruct the child's breathing. The opening of the nipple is also the size of the child's mouth. If the opening of the nipple were significant, for example, the size of an orange, how could this child live? Or if

the child's mouth were large, how could it take the tiny nipple tip? The nipple is ergonomically designed to conform to the contours of the infant's mouth. The nipple's ergonomic design seamlessly molds to the infant's mouth, providing a natural and comfortable latch that promotes optimal feeding and oral development. This bespoke design ensures a secure and uninterrupted suckling experience, fostering a harmonious bonding experience between parent and child. A practice observed in certain cultures is that mothers refrain from breastfeeding their newborns for the initial twenty-four hours, instead providing them with butter, ghee, and other substances, and then begin breastfeeding after this period.

One day, God gave one of our relatives a child. They told us to come for the prayer, adhan, and to name the child. Upon my arrival, it had not yet been a day since the child's last feeding. The child was placed in my lap, and I intended to engage in prayer, but I observed that the infant was continuously moving its lips and exhibiting sucking motions, despite the absence of a breast! Who instructed this child to suckle?

A neonate, devoid of consciousness, understanding, or perception, who merely weeks ago was a mere lump of flesh nestled within the confines of its mother's womb, has now emerged into this realm, gradually awakening to the world around it. Despite lacking worldly knowledge, this infant exhibits a mesmerizing innate reflex – it seeks nourishment through suckling. In doing so, it silently communicates its needs, expressing its desire for sustenance through the language of its heart and the gentle motions of its lips.

On the divine plane, God has ordained the mother's breast as sustenance for her newborn. The breast is ready with a bounty of milk, awaiting the infant's lips, which fit perfectly upon its contours. God has meticulously orchestrated this process, ensuring that the milk flows in harmony with the infant's sucking, preventing a flood that could overwhelm the delicate throat. Instead, the milk emerges in measured amounts through intricate pores, perfectly calibrated to the infant's needs. Even if the mother's breast overflows with milk, the infant receives only what it requires, demonstrating the divine wisdom that governs creation.

The electricity grid in a city always lights up a home, even if we turn on many lightbulbs. If we use a 40-watt lightbulb, it will light the house as much as 40 watts. Electricity is unlimited, but each lightbulb only consumes the power it needs. Similarly, milk in a mother's breast is also unlimited, but each child only sucks as much as it needs. In the past, some mothers used to breastfeed two or three children. Why is there no milk in women's breasts anymore? This is also one of the punishments of the End Times!

During infancy, delicate milk enters the child's body and undergoes metabolic processes. A fraction of this milk transforms into blood, giving rise to flesh, nerves, brain, tendons, and bones. Furthermore, milk possesses components that are absorbed into the bloodstream, ultimately contributing to developing the child's cognitive faculties, including the brain, thought processes, and intellect.

God has provided sustenance for all living beings, from humans to insects. Just as an infant depends on its mother's milk for nourishment, so too are the offspring of other creatures. Baby ants feed on the secretions of their workers, fly larvae consume the food regurgitated by their parents, locust nymphs feed on foliage, chicks peck at their parents' beaks for food, wolf pups nurse on their mother's milk, and baby bats suckle from their mother's mammary glands.

The bat, a captivating nocturnal mammal, is an anomaly among birds. Unlike other birds, bats do not lay eggs but give birth to live young. They also lack the sharp beaks typical of birds and instead possess small, pointed ears and sharp teeth. This resemblance to rodents has led to their colloquial name, "winged mouse".

Bats rely on echolocation to navigate and hunt in the dark. They emit high-frequency sound waves that bounce off objects and are then interpreted by their sensitive ears to create a mental map of their surroundings. This remarkable ability allows them to catch insects mid-air, even in total darkness.

The scope of God's table of sustenance: spiritual and material provisions

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) also ate, but what food did he consume? God gave him the zeal, thought, and intellect to understand the realm of the unseen and all the sciences of the first and the last, but he said, "It is not enough!" The knowledge of Gabriel was given to him, but he still sought knowledge beyond it; he was the center of God's wisdom! This is also a provision!

Sustenance is not constrained to material necessities but encompasses intellectual, mental, vital, and spiritual sustenance. Intellectual sustenance is the ability to reason and think critically, while mental sustenance enables comprehension and learning. Vital sustenance fuels life and growth, while spiritual sustenance fosters a connection with God. They all originate from God's boundless table of sustenance. This implies that material, intellectual, mental, vital, and spiritual sustenance are not distinct entities but interconnected components of the same divine provision.

ذی الجلال و الإکرام،

God is the possessor of majesty and honor.

و الفضل و الإنعام،

And [He has] favor and grace.

God has favor and blessings and continues to bestow grace and favor upon the world of existence.

الّذی بَعُدَ فلا یُری،
و قَرُبَ فشَهِدَ النَّجوی،

The One who is far away and cannot be seen. And the One who is near and witnesses the whispers.

God, in his transcendence, is at a distance beyond our sight, yet in his immanence, he is near the human soul, comprehending even its deepest whispers.

تبارکَ و تعالی،

God is most blessed and most exalted.

With divine grace, may the Exalted God increase our unwavering faith, granting us the profound knowledge of His glorious names and attributes. May we be firmly established in this elevated station, recognized as intimate companions of the divine.

اللهمّ صلّ علی محمّد و آل محمّد.

Session Eight

أعوذُ باللهِ مِنَ الشّیطانِ الرّجیم
بِسمِ اللهِ الرّحمنِ الرّحیم
و صلّی اللهُ علی محمّد و آلِهِ الطّاهرین
و لَعنَةُ اللهِ علی أعدائِهِم أجمَعینَ

الحمد لِلّه خالقِ الخَلق، باسِطِ الرِّزق، فالقِ الإصباح، ذی الجلالِ والإکرام و الفضلِ و الإنعام، الّذی بَعُدَ فلا یُری، و قَرُبَ فشَهِدَ النّجوی، تبارکَ و تعالی،[146]

All praise belongs to God, the Creator of the universe, the Provider of sustenance, the One who brings forth the dawn, and the possessor of majesty and beauty.

It is in Quran that:

تَبَٰرَكَ ٱسۡمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي ٱلۡجَلَٰلِ وَٱلۡإِكۡرَامِ.[147]

Blessed is the Name of your Lord, the Majestic and the Munificent.

The phrase "ذی الجلال و الإکرام" (di-al-Jalal wa al-ikram) translates to "The Possessor of Majesty and Honor". The word "جلال" (jalal) means "majesty," "glory," or "splendor." The word "إکرام" (Ikram) means "honor," "dignity," or "generosity".

Explanation of the meaning of God's grace

و الفضل و الإنعام،

And God has grace and favor.

فضل(Faḍl) means "abundance"; someone who possesses an abundance of something. They say that someone is virtuous, meaning he dramatically benefits from knowledge. Firstly, The boundless grace that God imparts upon His followers surpasses the limitations of merit or

worthiness. When an individual with an outstanding debt of ten tomans intends to settle it, returning the principal amount and bestowing an additional toman as a gesture of benevolence constitutes a 'favor.' However. when someone devoid of any outstanding obligations extends an unsolicited gift of eleven tomans, the entire sum exemplifies the 'grace' that characterizes divine benevolence. Secondly. in the realm of existence, no entity possesses the intrinsic right or entitlement to its existence. As such. the bestowal of existence by the Exalted God upon these beings could not have been predicated upon mere merit or obligatoriness; instead, it stands as proof of boundless grace.

وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ]. 148

Even the prescribed acts of worship we have ordained for our servants, if they diligently undertake them, we fulfill the promises we have bestowed upon them and generously exceed expectations. rendering their recompense bountiful. For instance, we declare that one who adheres to the prescribed time for prayer shall reap manifold rewards. Upon the Day of Judgment, you shall witness the fulfillment of these promises and the addition of even more. Such is the boundless generosity that we bestow upon our devoted servants.

Furthermore. the genesis of all blessings bestowed upon humanity by the Exalted God stems from the fundamental blessing of existence. Consequently, every blessing is an expression of God's grace.

و الإنعام.

And the bestowal of grace: 'God has all these blessings, and they all manifest His iḥsān (beautification, perfection, or excellence).

الَّذی بَعُدَ فَلا یُرى و قَرُبَ فَشَهِدَ النَّجوى، تبارک و تعالى.

Praise belongs only to this God, the One who is far and therefore cannot be seen, and near to the extent that He hears even the silent words of man and is a witness to everything. Thus, how blessed is this God, and how holy and worthy of glory?

The paradox of God's transcendence and immanence confounds the human mind, prompting the question: How can God be both infinitely distant, beyond the confines of our perception, and yet intimately present, privy to the hushed whispers of our hearts? Can an entity so remote, veiled from our sight, simultaneously reside within the depths of our being, aware of our innermost thoughts and unspoken desires? The word 'witness' (shahid) employed in this context signifies not merely a distant observer but an active participant, an omnipresent force that perceives and actively engages with our existence. Does such a concept defy the very laws of being? If God is so far removed, beyond the reach of our senses, how can He be so intimately connected, sharing our deepest secrets and tenderest emotions? Conversely, if God is so tangibly present, a constant companion in our lives, how can He be so elusive, existing beyond our capacity to comprehend?

To illustrate the profound paradox of God's transcendence and immanence, let us consider an example that lies within the realm of our physical experience. Consider the human eyeball, the intricate organ that enables us to perceive the world around us. Although it resides within the depths of our skull, nestled amidst the delicate neural pathways of our brain, we cannot directly observe it without external aid, such as a mirror or a specialized medical instrument . This innate inability to directly behold our eyeballs mirrors the enigmatic nature of God's presence in our lives. Just as our eyeball, though physically intimate, remains concealed from our direct gaze, so too does God, though intimately connected to our essence, exist beyond the confines of our physical perception.

Delving further into the profound paradox of God's transcendence and immanence, let us consider the enigmatic nature of the optical beam that penetrates our eyes. enabling us to perceive the world. Though inextricably linked to our visual faculties, this invisible yet indispensable illumination source remains veiled from our direct perception. While the beam of light is intrinsically connected to our sight, it remains unseen, transcending our limited sensory grasp. The beam of light allows us to perceive the external realm yet remains invisible to our naked eyes.

Within the confines of this mosque, a radiant ambiance permeates the air, illuminating the very essence of our surroundings. The door, walls, carpet, and ceiling stand bathed in this celestial glow, and their features are enhanced and magnified by divine radiance. What is the enigmatic source of this illumination? Can we perceive it in its purest form, devoid of any tangible medium to reflect its brilliance?

If you try to see the light without allowing it to reflect off any object, like a door, a wall, a friend, a rug, a curtain, or anything else, you will find it impossible to perceive. God has created many things like this in our world, and they serve as signs and lessons, pointing to the same truth: we can only understand the light by seeing its reflections in the world around us.

Picture yourself standing beside a body of serene water, where the stillness allows the vibrant blue sky to be perfectly mirrored. As you peer into its depths, a mesmerizing reflection of yourself emerges - a poignant manifestation of your being. However, your self-reflection fades into obscurity if you attempt to scrutinize the water itself, its color, clarity, or any other physical attribute. It is as if the water, in its capacity to reflect your image, becomes a veil obscuring its presence.

God's nearness and remoteness: A comparison to the soul and its manifestations

To simplify, humans possess a sense of self and personality. When one says, "I prayed today," another says, "I fasted." and I say, "I read the Quran," we are all referring to this "I" that enables us to perform these actions, an undeniable concept since we all possess an "I" and declare "I"! But where is this "I" that we speak of? What form does it take? What is its countenance? I am referring to the "I" itself, not the physical body. The body is mine and separated from me; my hand, eye, thoughts, heart, and perception are separate. But what shape does the "I" itself possess? What countenance does it wear? Have you ever seen the "I" to witness its blessed countenance? This "I" guides our actions. With it, we pray, study, work, worship, fast, intend, visit the mosque, listen, speak, break our fast, and return to the mosque.

The misconception of self-perception

The notion that self-identity is solely determined by physical appearance, as perceived through mirrors or reflective surfaces, represents a prevalent yet narrow perspective. The face we observe merely reflects our physical appearance, representing our external being, but it does not embody our true self. Like the clothing that adorns our bodies, the face is an accessory, not the essence of our being. Our true self transcends the physical realm, existing in a realm beyond our immediate perception.

The face we see in mirrors, water, or other reflective surfaces is a reflection tailored to our understanding, dependent on our positioning and the quality of the reflecting surface. However, it fails to capture the essence of who we are, the true self that resides beyond the limitations of physical form. Our true self is not a tangible object that can be observed with the eye or imagined in the mind's eye. It is a spiritual reality, an intangible essence that defies conventional perception.

To truly grasp our true self, we must transcend the limitations of our physical senses and engage in a more profound spiritual exploration. Only then can we begin to perceive the profound depths of our being, the true essence of our existence.

Picture a behemoth with a hundred wheels, two hundred wings, and two engines affixed to each wing, amounting to four hundred engines. Does the thought of such a fantastical creation seem beyond human imagination? Not at all. Visualize a carpenter diligently crafting a blueprint in their mind, meticulously detailing every aspect of their creation. This blueprint, a meticulously rendered representation of the carpenter's vision, is the foundation for the object that will soon take shape in the physical world. Just as a carpenter's blueprint precedes the manifestation of their creation, so too can humans envision an aircraft like the one described earlier, meticulously crafting the details in their minds before bringing it to life in the real world. The ability to imagine such a complex and intricate structure is not an impossibility but a testament to the boundless potential of human imagination.

One cannot see their courage in their mind. One can say, "I am brave, and I am not afraid of anything!"; their friends can say the same thing. However, courage does not have a physical form that one can see. One may be brave, but this will not be physically visible. Similarly, generosity does not have a physical form that one can see. There are many other examples of things that do not have a physical form. These things are not for the world of form.

The human "self" cannot be seen. This is not because it is hidden or obscured but because it has no physical form. The human self is not a physical object but a spiritual reality. The body is only a vessel for the human self. The true self is the essence of our being, the part of us that is beyond the physical world. The human self is so far beyond our physical senses that we cannot fully understand it.

The self is like air. We can feel it but cannot see it. We can breathe it but not hold it in our hands. The self is difficult to grasp by thought. Our sense of self is inherently close to us. We possess a constant, albeit often subconscious, awareness of ourselves. This includes our thoughts, feelings, and desires, which can all be understood as expressions of the self.

و الذاتي" لا يُعقل.[149]

All the sacrifices, hardships, and sufferings you endure are for this "self". You perform your religious obligations, practice self-discipline, engage in productive endeavors, pursue knowledge, and delve into spiritual practices for your "self." How deeply ingrained is this self within you? It is so intimately intertwined with your being that even if you were to lose your arm, the self would remain unscathed. The essence of the self is inextricably entwined with the human being. While the foot may be severed, the heart may ache, and the body may succumb to death, the self endures.

The depth of the connection between the 'I' and the human being is truly profound. As I converse discreetly over the phone, even before the first syllable escapes my lips, do you grasp the essence of my message more readily than I, the one conveying it? Indeed, I do, for the whispering discourse stems from my being, and the emergence of this subdued utterance hinges entirely upon my volition. Therefore, the 'I' remains inextricably interconnected with me, and I am privy to the whispers even before my tongue commences its articulation. How much more so should you be capable of comprehending the matter, given that you are now aware of a third party's presence?

The constant presence of the 'I' within the human being is truly remarkable. From the moment one decides to take a wudu and retire for the night, the 'I' remains an ever-present companion. The' I' remains steadfast as one embarks on the bedtime routine, reciting sacred verses or simply pulling the covers over oneself. Even in moments of spiritual communion, the 'I' joins in the invocation of God's name, whispering "O God!" alongside the tongue.

The 'I' follows the individual throughout the day, accompanying them from their bed to the workplace, from the shop floor to the weighing scale. It is an inseparable force, an integral aspect of one's being. Despite the individual's desire to escape or detach from this omnipresent 'I,' such an endeavor proves futile.

Embark on a quest to isolate this elusive "I" within yourself. If you succeed, try leaving it behind at home, locking the door securely, and venturing independently. But mark my words; this "I" is as agile as a wave, effortlessly permeating walls to join you wherever you roam.

How can this "I" transcend the barriers of physical matter? Consider the penetrating power of X-rays and ultraviolet beams that effortlessly penetrate solid bodies like bones, flesh, and metal. If these invisible forces can traverse such dense substances, why should this ethereal "I" be confined by mere walls? This "I" is an omnipresent companion, seamlessly accompanying you through doors, bodies, and beyond. Its proximity is undeniable, yet its proper form remains shrouded in mystery. Have any of you ever laid eyes upon this elusive "I"? If so, please provide us with profound insights. Let each individual who has glimpsed the essence of their being share their unique perspective.

The preceding approximation provided a clearer understanding of the subject matter. Now, let us delve into the realm of the Divine. The Exalted God is not a physical entity that the human senses can perceive; if He were, He would be relegated to the level of the human body, which is inferior to the true essence of humanity. This is because the human possesses an immaterial soul that remains unseen, while the body is merely one of its manifestations. If God were a physical being, would He be reduced to the level of a physical object? No, He would be placed alongside the human body rather than near the true essence of humanity. This would diminish the status of God relative to that of humanity, putting Him on par with inanimate objects. God is not a physical being with a definable shape or size; He is beyond the realm of human imagination.

Imagine an immense airplane with one end stretching from the east to the west, its immensity encompassing the entire world. The passengers within this colossal vessel represent the world as a whole, and the pilot is none other than the archangels Mikael, Israfil, and Jibrael. Could an

airplane surpass this scale? Yet, even in this hypothetical scenario, the aircraft retains a finite size. But God, the Divine, is boundless; He transcends all measure and form.

With its limited capacity, the human mind can only conceive of things with shape and form. However, being dimensionless and formless, God defies our ability to comprehend fully. His essence is beyond the grasp of our imagination. Shape and form are inherently associated with boundaries and quantifiable properties. Consequently, without limitations or measurable attributes, God would inherently lack definable shape or form.

No matter how the human mind races and attempts to capture God's image with a camera, God continuously evades capture, retreating behind that column! Man endeavors to capture God's form with this camera, but God conceals Himself behind that column, resembling individuals engaged in a game of hide-and-seek. God reveals Himself to man, yet when man tries to apprehend Him, God vanishes, emerging on the other side of man! Once in a moment, He gestures, but as soon as He tries to reveal Himself, He vanishes. God unveils Himself to humanity, stepping forward once! However, when you attempt to capture Him with your mind, you discover He is impervious to photographic depiction.

When God manifests Himself, He does not appear in a physical form. He unveils His essence and shakes your very being. However, you attempt to capture His essence in a form, but He remains elusive and beyond our comprehension. This is a profound truth affirmed by all prophets, Imams, wise men, and sages: God is beyond human imagination.

Humanity's entire mental apparatus, the very instrument that seeks to comprehend God, is a creation of God, and it is inherently limited. A being that transcends boundaries and form, one that exists without limits or dimensions, cannot be confined within the limitations of a finite mind. Therefore, not only is God not seen, but He does not even come to mind![150] He is not imaginable! So, how far is this God? He is so far away that no matter how much a person wants to imagine Him, he cannot.

The all-pervasive presence of God

The term "whispering" refers to conversing softly. When two individuals engage in peaceful dialogue, we assert that they whispered. When three individuals converse discreetly, we assert that those three whispered to one another. During the nights of Ramadan, you engage in supplication, implying that you speak with God from the depths of your being, concealed from the scrutiny of others.

The Qur'an provides a profound statement: No group of three persons engages in hushed discourse without God being the fourth among them, and no gathering of five without God being the sixth, and so on, regardless of the number of people present, God is one among them.[151]

If an assembly of a hundred people engages in conversation, God emerges as the hundred and first among them; however, this hundred and first presence does not imply that God occupies a physical position within the assembly. Instead, God's presence permeates the hearts and minds of each of those hundred individuals, acting as the unifying force that binds them together.

God transcends the limitations of physical form and exists as a transcendent spiritual being, unbound by time and space constraints. He is not merely one amongst the hundred individuals; he is the essence underpinning their existence.

God's presence is not confined to specific gatherings or locations; rather, it permeates the very fabric of reality, existing simultaneously in every point of the universe. This divine presence is not merely numerical, as God transcends the limitations of mere quantity. Since God is closer to all beings than they are to themselves, and since the existence of every being originates from God, it follows that God is omnipresent. He is not absent from any corner of the universe; he is beyond our ability to comprehend fully. Attempt to locate a setting where you are not yourself; arrive at the shop but not as yourself or engage in prayer but not as yourself. However, it is not feasible!

بی‌دلی در همه احوال خدا با او بود　　　او نمی‌دیدش و از دور خدایا می‌کرد.[152]

In realms of folly, God's presence did abide,
Yet man, in blindness, called from a distant side.
Amidst his joys, his woes, his every plight,
God held him gently, bathed in loving light.
But man's eyes, clouded by worldly sway,
Failed to perceive the Divine's display.

Thus, from afar, he sought the Lord's embrace,
Unknowing that His love filled every space.

Humans cannot physically perceive their true selves but can apprehend their essence. This essence, which exists independently of the physical form, mind, and imagination, is the true self that each individual inherently perceives. An inherent aspect of your being is an unwavering awareness of yourself, so profound that your self-awareness persists even when you are oblivious to all else. You are invariably aware of your existence.

My discourse anchors your attention at this very moment, engaging all your senses. Yet, should a bee emerge from beneath your foot and deliver its sting, you would instinctively retract that limb without hesitation. This fundamental reality is so intrinsically present within itself that it perceives itself from every conceivable perspective in the initial instance. In the subsequent instance, it encompasses the actions of others.

Even within the realm of slumber, your consciousness remains tethered to the real world, responding instinctively to stimuli that pierce the veil of sleep. A prick from a needle will prompt an immediate recoil of your foot, while a splash of water will wrench you awake, defying the constraints of your slumber. Even as you are turned in bed, latent inner guidance compels you to realign yourself, a silent command that echoes through the depths of your being. This enigmatic directive begs the question: Who orchestrates this unwavering return to wakefulness?

When your mind is not working, then your true self is present. It is a sense of your essential nature, a sense of who you are beyond your thoughts and feelings. Despite any circumstance, the human essence remains intimately acquainted with itself. While it is possible for an individual to dissociate from external beings, disregard their presence, and temporarily withdraw from the perceived world, such detachment does not extend to the self. Individuals can become so deeply immersed in their internal thoughts and experiences that they lose conscious perception of their physical presence, including their limbs and even their hands. They may struggle to identify which hand is theirs, unable to distinguish between their right and left. This profound immersion into the inner world can extend to the extent of overlooking one's physical body, the intricate tapestry of thoughts and emotions, and even the fundamental faculties of perception, memory, and imagination. Yet, amidst this profound self-absorption, the essence of one's identity remains unwaveringly present.

The proximity of this 'self' to humanity is unfathomable, so profound that it defies expression. For the moment we utter the word 'self,' this inherent truth of selfhood and existence is brought into being. This 'self' is the essence of reality itself, the wellspring from which all else emanates.

The manifestation of all beings, their attributes, and their effects emanates from the very essence of existence, and this insightful existence itself is rooted in the Essence of the Exalted God.

While ornate jewelry and clothing can extend and embellish an individual's outward expression, they ultimately remain secondary to the core self. Just as decorations require a base to adhere to, so do bodily adornments like hands, eyes, and ears, which rely on the fundamental existence of a human being. Ultimately, the inner essence – the "self" – occupies the central and enduring position within human experience.

A common self-identity pervades all beings, forming a singular truth encompassing all existence. The physical form, the appendages of hands and feet, the sensory organs of eyes and ears, the inherent characteristics of being a rock, being earth, being a carpet, being a mountain, being a door, being a wall, being a sheep, and being a cow – all of these are mere accessories and manifestations of existence. The true essence of existence, the self-identity that anchors all beings, is existence itself. It is an immutable entity, incapable of nonexistence. Therefore, the truth of this existence, which is rooted in God, is closer to that being than to itself.

I vehemently attest to the presence of all your souls, who hold a special place in my heart, that God, the Exalted, resides closer to us than we are to ourselves. Since when we utter the word "self," there is nothing more intimately connected to this "self" than ourselves. Yet, God transcends this self-identity; He precedes and encompasses our essence. How can it be conceivable that an individual utters a statement and God remains unaware of its meaning? What does it even mean for God to be "uninformed"? How can a person convey a message if God is not present, if He is not the very source of their being? God exists before our self-identity, and our self-identity and existence wholly depend upon His boundless existence.

Before articulating our thoughts, we embark on deliberation, volition, and mental strategizing. The words "I" impart to you now are not devoid of intention; however, the rapidity and succession of volitional acts render them invisible, defying our ability to isolate and analyze them. Despite their elusive nature, they emanate from the depths of our being. Were these expressions to dissociate from ourselves, they would elude perception. Is your faculty of auditory perception divorced from your essence? If so, it would be beyond your comprehension.

Consequently, our fundamental reality, upon which these concepts are anchored, is grounded in God. God's existence precedes ours, and we exist in a secondary order, while speech and hearing occupy a tertiary position. The essence of our being is rooted in God, and we ultimately depend on God's boundless being for our existence.

قَرُبَ فَشَهِدَ النَّجوى.

He is near, and He witnesses the whispers.

This is the meaning of "!قَرُبَ فَشَهِدَ النَّجوى" God is so close that He knows the whispers of everyone; not only the whispers, but also the intentions and wills that a person has with himself:

يا مَن يَعلَمُ خائِنَةَ ألأعيُنِ وَما تُخفِي الصُّدُورُ.[153]

O He who knows the betrayal of the eyes and what the hearts conceal.

An individual may harbor malicious thoughts without ever expressing them or indulge in dark fantasies while keeping them hidden. Only the Divine possesses the knowledge of these internal thoughts. This situation is genuinely profound, perplexing, and challenging to comprehend! Who can fathom this discourse? Imam Ali (Peace be upon him) eloquently addresses this challenge:

و كُلَّ سَيِّئَةٍ أمَرتَ بِإثباتِها الكِرامَ الكاتِبينَ الَّذينَ وَكَّلتَهُم بِحِفظِ ما يكونُ مِنّي، و جَعَلتَهُم شُهوداً عَلَيَّ مع جوارحي، و كُنتَ أنتَ الرَّقيبَ عَلَيَّ مِن ورائِهِم، و الشّاهِدَ لِما خَفِيَ عنهُم؛ و بِرحمَتِكَ أخفَيتَهُ و بِفَضلِكَ سَتَرتَهُ.[154]

And every evil deed that you commanded to be recorded by the noble angels whom you entrusted with preserving my deeds, and whom you made witnesses against me with my limbs, and you were the supervisor over me from behind them, and the witness of what was hidden from them; and with your mercy, you concealed it, and with your grace, you covered it.

Oh, Divine Being, please pardon my transgressions! Forgive all of my misdeeds! Indeed, there are offenses that a person commits, and the entire world is aware of them; one man shaves his beard, and all can see it; another adorns himself with a gold ring, and all can witness it; yet another sports a tie and, in an attempt to rationalize his actions, proclaims, "Sir, it is a pristine handkerchief!" And yet, the world still sees it. But you, Omnipotent Creator, cannot be deceived! Even if individuals strive to conceal their sins, you remain mindful of their actions.

There are also unconscious transgressions. An individual may develop a plan to commit an act, such as usury, betrayal, or a crime, tomorrow. This plot may exist only in the mind, undetectable by others. However, angels, celestial beings tasked by God with observing humanity's actions and thoughts, are aware of these intentions. Angels inhabit the afterlife, the world of archetypes, and the physical world, and they are attuned to the workings of the material realm, constantly monitoring an individual's motivations. As soon as a person harbors an evil impulse, angels meticulously document it, capturing a holographic representation of their essence. Thus, individuals are not permitted to entertain nefarious thoughts.

While intentions can sometimes reside in the subconscious, unformed and unplanned, even before conscious deliberation or visualization of deception takes place, an underlying motive, yet to be articulated, may drive individuals towards wrongful actions. This hidden impetus remains intangible, unseen even by the "form-transcribing angels" of the mind. However, another class of formless "angels" exists, capable of perceiving and meticulously recording the essence of these nascent impulses. Elevated further and endowed with a finer touch, transgressions within the human heart and soul are interwoven with the nature of their being and the core of their thought processes. These subtle transgressions jolt and incite individuals, propelling them towards betrayals that transcend the realm of form. Who perceives these transgressions? Not even the angels can discern their presence anymore! But can even God remain impervious to their existence? Can the Creator of the heart and the soul remain blind to the sins deeply embedded within His creation? Certainly not! For God's omniscience extends to the very depths of humans.

و كلّ سيّئة أمرت بإثباتها الكرام الكاتبين الذين وكّلتهم بحفظ ما يكون منّي، و جعلتهم شهودا علىّ مع جوارحي، و كنت أنت الرّقيب علىّ من ورائهم و الشاهد لما خفي عنهم.

Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) says: Oh, Divine Being, grant pardon for all the transgressions entrusted to Your noble angels who keep records. Eradicate and obliterate the essence of those transgressions that intertwine with the fabric of my existence and nature, transcending the realm of angelic perception and escaping their ability to record. These angels remain oblivious to the transgressions committed by this believer. Beyond these angels, You stand supreme, a vigilant observer scrutinizing the hidden facets that elude their grasp and defy their comprehension. Only You, the Creator of the heart and soul, possess the profound insight to unveil these concealed transgressions.

و برحمتك أخفيته . و بفضلك سترته و أن توفّر حظّي من كلّ خير أنزلته.[155]

You shielded my transgressions through Your boundless compassion, and through Your overflowing benevolence, You veiled them from sight. As I humbly seek Your pardon, I implore not mere concealment but rather an utter expungement.

Consider the stark contrast between casting a blanket over a raging inferno to extinguish its flames and eradicating the fire, utterly obliterating its existence. Such is the purification I seek, Lord, a destruction of my sins. By the grace You have bestowed upon me, I implore You to grant me a portion of every bounty You have bestowed upon humanity. I yearn to partake of Your boundless goodness, to mold my life by Your divine will, and to bask in the radiant light of Your blessings.

Hence, what can elude God's perception? Nothing! Whether a person ascends to the celestial realm, delves into the earth's subterranean depths, traverses the farthest corners of the globe, navigates the expanse of the material world, journeys through the depths of time, embarks on cosmic voyages to the moon, Mars, or any celestial destination, the essence of humanity remains. Can this individual discard their humanity and depart? Nay! Neither can they sever their connection with God, for the Divine Presence pervades all existence.

وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِي فِي ٱلسَّمَآءِ إِلَٰهٞ وَفِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ إِلَٰهٞ وَهُوَ ٱلۡحَكِيمُ ٱلۡعَلِيمُ.[156]

The one and only God reigns supreme in the heavens above and on the earth below.

Where does God reside? Is He in the heavens above or below? Is He in the air or upon the earth? Or is He within this very mosque? Nay, He is even closer to us than that! He is more intimately entwined with our flesh than our clothing, skin than our bones, and our very being than our physical cells. He permeates our thoughts and intellect and lies at the very core of our existence. God's embrace is so vast that the word 'embrace' can barely encompass His boundless presence. We are utterly dependent upon God, for He is the essence of our being. We are not mere vessels existing independently of Him; we are inextricably linked to His divine light. It is not that we exist independently, and God encircles us from without; such a notion is utterly erroneous. We are intimately enmeshed in the fabric of God's existence, inseparable from His boundless being.

Consider this mosque, anchored by these pillars, providing its foundation and integrity. Likewise, the marble stones that grace this wall derive their support from the mosque's structure. Could you envision these marble stones standing independently, devoid of the mosque's support, and the mosque somehow exerting control over them from the outside? This is a misconception. Just as these stones depend on the mosque for their stability, so do we rely on God for our existence. God is not an external force that governs us from a distance; He is immanent, woven into the fabric of our being, sustaining and nurturing us.

Our very being is contingent upon God;
He is the pre-eminent, and we are but reflections of His dominion

يَسۡـَٔلُهُۥ مَن فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِۚ كُلَّ يَوۡمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأۡنٖ.[157]

We are God's reflections, expressions of God's attributes, and creations. God is the uncaused cause, and we are the caused beings. God surrounds us; that is, there is an active and intentional existence related to our essence even before the existence of our essence. God surrounds us because He is present within us and aware of our thoughts and actions. He is always with us, even before we exist.

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ.
إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ * مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ.[158]

The verse [Quran 50:16] 'And We are closer to him than his jugular vein' refers to this matter, and [Quran 50:16-18] 'When the two receivers receive, sitting on the right and the left, no word does he utter except that by him is a guardian ready to record' is the work of the angels; God is ahead of these.

مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ
إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا.[159]

No gathering of three but He is the fourth among them, nor of five but He is the sixth among them, nor of less than that or more, but He is with them wherever they are is all about this.

With God's blessing, if the truth of monotheism is revealed to man, he will understand that God is invisible. The analogy of straw falling into the ocean and attempting to grasp its immensity highlights the limitations of human perception in comprehending the divine. Even the most fervent seeker can only experience a limited manifestation of the divine, much like the straw can only touch the water directly surrounding it.

The nightingale, confined to the garden and limited to its immediate vicinity, can only perceive the flower upon which it perches. Yet, how can this nightingale comprehend the garden's vast expanse, stretching across a hundred million miles? Likewise, confined to the sea, the fish can only maneuver within its immediate watery domain, incapable of grasping the sea's entirety.

Can water striders that reside in stagnant water indeed venture to the depths of the ocean? Water striders are commonly found in still or slow-moving freshwater environments. They are adept at navigating the surface tension of the water, allowing them to glide effortlessly. While they may be observed in areas of a river with reduced flow, particularly along bends, they are not adapted to survive in the ocean's depths. Despite their impressive agility on the surface, water striders lack the physiological adaptations necessary to withstand the immense pressure and environmental conditions in the deep ocean. Their bodies are specifically designed to exploit the surface tension of freshwater, allowing them to breathe, feed, and reproduce within this unique niche. These fascinating insects play a vital role in the freshwater ecosystem, primarily preying on mosquitoes and other small insects on the water's surface. Their dependence on surface tension restricts their movement to the topmost layer of the water body.

به کنه ذاتش خرد برد پی
اگر رسد خس به قعر دریا.[160]

A humble blade of grass, so frail and small,
They cannot descend to depths where the ocean's tides enthrall.
Likewise, the wisdom that we humans hold,
I cannot fathom depths where God's essence unfolds.

Just as a blade of grass could never descend to the ocean's floor, the human mind will forever remain distant from comprehending God's boundless being.

عنقا شکار کس نشود دام بازگیر.
کانجا همیشه باد به دست است دام را.[161]

Pursuing divine liqā' (meeting with Allah) is not about physically witnessing God, visualizing God in the mind, or conjuring up an image of God. These are mere illusions that fail to capture the essence of divine transcendence. Instead, the true path to spiritual union lies in grasping the profound realization that our very being emanates God's boundless existence. Our existence is intrinsically interwoven with God's essence, knowledge, majesty, and life. It is but a

manifestation of His attributes, utterly dwarfed by the immensity of His being. In the grand scheme of divinity, our attempts to comprehend God through physical or mental representations are futile. God, in His infinite nature, is beyond the grasp of human perception. Our limited faculties can only apprehend the reflections of His divine light, never the source itself.

و صلّى الله على محمّد و آله.

Translation of excerpts from the Duʿā' al-Iftitāḥ by commentator

الحَمدُ لِلّهِ الّذي لَيسَ لَهُ مُنازِعٌ يُعادِلُهُ و لا شَبيهٌ يُشاكِلُهُ و لا ظَهيرٌ يُعاضِدُهُ، قَهَرَ بِعِزَّتِهِ الأعِزّاءَ و تَواضَعَ لِعَظَمَتِهِ العُظَماءُ، فَبَلَغَ بِقُدرَتِهِ ما يَشاءُ.
الحَمدُ لِلّهِ الّذي يُجيبُني حينَ أُناديهِ، و يَستُرُ عَلَيَّ كُلَّ عَورَةٍ و أنَا اعصيهِ، و يُعَظِّمُ النِّعمَةَ عَلَيَّ فَلا أُجازيهِ.[162]

I offer my heartfelt praise to the Exalted God, who stands alone without peer, is without equal, and requires no assistance in His endeavors. His majesty has subjugated the proud, and the mighty have bowed in deference to His greatness. By His omnipotence, He has achieved all that He desires. I offer my humble gratitude to the Merciful Lord, who responds to my pleas, conceals my imperfections despite my transgressions, and bestows me immense blessings that I cannot reciprocate. In His exalted station, He abases the arrogant and the mighty to succumb to His majesty and grandeur. Thus, with His omnipotent power and boundless ability, He effortlessly attains all He desires and wills. Praise be to the Gracious Lord, Who heeds my supplications and shields my imperfections with His limitless grace, showering upon me His manifold blessings. At the same time, I falter in my gratitude and persist in ways that deviate from His divine will.

اعوذُ بِاللهِ مِنَ الشَّيطانِ الرَّجيم
بِسمِ اللهِ الرَّحمنِ الرَّحيم
و صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحمَّدٍ و آلِهِ الطّاهِرين
و لعنَةُ اللهِ عَلَى أعدائِهِم أجمَعينَ مِنَ الآنَ إلى قيامِ يومِ الدِّين

فَكَم مِن مَوهِبَةٍ هَنيئَةٍ قد أعطاني.163

How abundantly and graciously You have bestowed upon me countless blessings!

The word "هَنيئَةٍ" (hanī'ah) means "pleasant."

The essence of hanī'ah

Have you ever encountered those scorching summer days when the oppressive heat saps your energy, and an insatiable thirst threatens to overwhelm you? I have experienced this all too often, leaving me parched and yearning for relief.

In such moments of intense thirst, the gift of a refreshing glass of ice water is nothing short of transformative. Its coolness washes over you, soothing your parched throat and reviving your senses. This is the essence of *hanī'ah*, a word that encapsulates the delightful and refreshing quality of something that quenches our deepest needs.

Hanī'ah signifies refreshment and a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment that transcends physical gratification. Drinking that ice-cold water is akin to a lifeline, replenishing our bodies and spirits. Hanī'ah embodies the harmonious blend of physical delight and emotional fulfillment. It is a taste of paradise, a moment of pure bliss that soothes the soul and revitalizes the spirit.

How abundant are the blessings that God has bestowed upon humankind? He has rescued us from the brink of death by healing our debilitating ailments. He has opened new avenues for us where we once faced insurmountable obstacles. He has guided us away from dangerous paths that would have led us astray into sin, disbelief, and infidelity. These remarkable blessings deeply touch our hearts, evoking profound joy and peace. When the path to sin is blocked and redirected towards obedience, the individual finds that obedience becomes a delightful experience. This is because obedience aligns with the human spirit in a way analogous to the curd and porridge that individuals consume during the early hours of breaking their fast.

During the pre-dawn hours, individuals typically prepare warm milk and porridge. They would not serve dry bread with sugar candy to break their fast, which would be difficult to chew and might even induce choking. Obedience, in a similar vein, aligns seamlessly with the human spirit. It is a nourishing and easily digestible sustenance for the soul. In contrast, sin resembles substances that irritate and lacerate the throat. It is challenging to consume and inflicts harm on the soul. When the path to sin is obstructed, the soul is liberated to savor the authentic sweetness of obedience. This liberation arises from the soul's freedom from the weight of sin. As a result, it can now fully appreciate the beauty and goodness of obedience.

How abundantly God has bestowed upon us manifold blessings throughout our lives! From the moment of our birth to this moment, day and night, we are enveloped in these blessings and favors in myriad forms and qualities. Yet, a person needs to comprehend their essence and their provenance! Indeed, he needs to grasp their significance!

Today, we marked the 21st day of Ramadan. I never imagined that I could speak at length during this holy month, both day and night. Even when not observing the fast, I often felt unwell and needed more energy to speak. However, now that we are fasting, we can talk without feeling tired or exhausted. I am even surprised by my resilience. Today, I delivered a sermon lasting an hour and a quarter. After the Grand Master recited the Quran, I realized I possessed a strength that enabled me to speak for an extended period.

Before Ramadan, I never considered such feats possible. I often felt unwell and skipped some Tuesday night gatherings. Even when I attended, I would read a few verses from the Quran and abruptly depart due to a lack of energy. This newfound strength stems from God's grace, not my accomplishments.

God wants to demonstrate to humanity that the power to grant and withhold strength lies solely in His hands. If He bestows us strength, we can achieve everything; if He withdraws it, we will perish. Like a balloon that deflates upon being punctured, our strength diminishes when God

withdraws His support. When children tamper with these cars parked on the street, they emit a hiss, and their tires go flat. The car owner returns later to discover this and exclaims, "Oh no, my tires are flat!" They fail to recall that children were playing with them. In the same way, our power, as well as all our conceits, will dissipate in an instant. All of these blessings originate from God.

The nature of the material world based on competition

Humankind exists in a world where all creation is its adversary. This is due to the material world's fundamental basis on competition. Just as animals in the desert compete fiercely for sustenance and territory, all beings in the world, both human and animal, seek to destroy man. All are hostile to humanity's existence and essence and would do so if they could! Yet, God shields man amidst a multitude of enemies.

It is suitable for a man to ask his mother about the calamities and diseases that happened to him in childhood. Newborns are so fragile that they are in danger of death every day. If a gust of wind blows on them, they can die. A compromised immune system due to an inadequate diet can exacerbate existing health conditions or increase susceptibility to infections like diarrhea, which can be life-threatening in severe cases. How did God organize this system? What kind of love and affection did He give the parents, and what troubles did He solve for them? In addition to the perfectly designed nourishment mothers provide through breastfeeding, God has protected humanity from all diseases, troubles, enemies, and obstacles in this life. It is like a man keeping an egg in the middle of a rock.

Humankind is perpetually under siege by an immense array of disorders. At any given moment, an unfathomable multitude of diseases lurks, silently threatening our well-being. Countless ailments, some yet to be identified, plague our various bodily systems – from the delicate intricacies of the eyes to the robust functionality of the heart and kidneys. Yet, despite this constant barrage of health challenges, the concept of overall health remains singular – a state embodied by an individual free from debilitating afflictions.

Amidst this panorama of diseases, God has given humanity the extraordinary gift of health. In the face of countless hazards and life-threatening perils, God has endowed humans with an unwavering will and unwavering focus, empowering them to navigate the problematic pathways of existence.

This divine gift of health, a signal of resilience in the face of overwhelming adversity, is a testament to the profound benevolence of the Creator. God's relentless care for humanity manifests in preserving our physical well-being and cultivating inner resilience and the strength to overcome life's challenges.

The divine gift of preservation that shields humanity within a multitude of perils

This divine preservation is so profound that it safeguards man even within the flames of fire. The Most High God, in His benevolence, shielded Abraham the Khalil from harm despite being thrown into a raging inferno by Nimrod.

God, the Creator, also preserves delicate glassware within the very depths of impenetrable stone. The glass vessels we behold are all formed from stone, yet God, in His infinite wisdom, nurtures and safeguards these precious creations within the heart of the rock.

In an apt verse, the poet Baba Tahir captures the essence of this divine protection: Had God not protected me, I would have fallen into the fire.

شب، تاریک و سنگستان و مو مست
قدح از دست مو افتاد و نشکست
نگهدارنده‌اش نیکو نگهداشت
وگرنه صد قدح نفتاده بشکست[164]

In the darkness deep, where rocks abound,
A drunkard roams, his senses drowned.
His cup slips, a fragile prize,
Yet fate decrees, it shall not break, surprise!
A watchful eye, with gentle care,
Has safeguarded this precious ware.
For if it fell and hit the stones,
A hundred such might shatter like broken bones.

Oh. keeper true, whose vigil weaves,
A lifeline for the cup it conceives.
In shadows deep, where harm may lurk,
Your vigilance, a guiding spark.
So let us learn from this tale so grand,
That even in the darkest night, God's hand
Protects us, with unseen grace,
A watchful keeper, in His sacred space.

An individual experiencing a situation of extreme difficulty and danger, comparable to being caught in a violent storm at sea with a risk of their vessel being capsized, faces a dangerous and potentially life-threatening ordeal. As death stares him in the face, the realization dawns upon him that no one will ritualistically cleanse his body, envelop him in shrouds, offer prayers on his behalf, or proclaim the resounding declaration of faith, "There is no God but Allah." His funeral ceremony will be forgone, leaving him to sink into the depths, where fish eagerly await to scavenge his remains, his unmarked grave becoming the ocean's embrace. Yet, if in this moment of dire peril, the ship miraculously navigates through the tumultuous currents, safely reaching the shore, and the man regains his footing on solid ground, uttering a heartfelt expression of gratitude, "Praise be to Allah!" this deliverance becomes a cherished gift, akin to the refreshing embrace of cool water. How numerous are the blessings bestowed upon us by the Exalted God, which we often overlook daily? Until Allah wills, may we continue to cherish and express our gratitude for His infinite grace.

و عَظيمةٍ مَخوفةٍ قد كَفاني.

And from a great and terrifying fear, He has sufficed me.

How many complex and challenging tasks and unforeseen events has God helped people through and taken care of on their behalf?

و بَهجَةٍ مُونِقَةٍ قَد اراني.

In His infinite grace, God has shown me a beautiful delight.

The universe is teeming with spectacles of grandeur, mesmerizing displays of divine artistry, and awe-inspiring wonders that have captivated humanity's imagination for ages. These manifestations of God's boundless creativity are constant reminders of His majesty and the beauty of His creation.

The ascent of beings in the realm of potentiality

In recognition of His boundless benevolence and omnipotence, it is befitting that we praise God with the emotional declaration, 'What a magnificent God You are'!

فأثنى عَلَيه حامداً.[165]

I praise such a God with admiration. That is, I praise and glorify Him.

The Creator has lavished blessings beyond human recompense and has given us generous gifts that we are utterly incapable of reciprocating. He has shielded us from calamities and misfortunes that defy human compensation. Yet, in His boundless beneficence, He has graced us with spectacles of unparalleled beauty, accompanied by signs that resonate with profound enlightenment.

Attributing all positive experiences solely to ourselves can lead us to self-aggrandizement. Yet, in this self-centeredness, we overlook the profound role that the Divine plays in our existence. The ultimate expression of our perfection lies not in self-aggrandizement but in praise, a heartfelt acknowledgment of God's boundless grace and benevolence. Yet even this praise, while indispensable, cannot elevate us to the station of absolute existence. We can transcend our limitations and attain perfection through God's guidance and grace.

In awe of God's boundless grace and omnipotence, we exalt Him with heartfelt devotion, exclaiming, 'What a magnificent God You are!' O God, You are the source of all existence and wield all-encompassing power. You have delivered us from perilous predicaments, rescuing us from the precipice of destruction and death. You have transformed our lives into a tapestry of

joy and delight, bestowing us bountiful gifts that are not a mere exchange for our actions. They are the purest expressions of Your divine love and benevolence.

If God had desired compensation for the gifts bestowed upon humanity, he would have mandated that humans compensate him for his blessings. For instance, he might have declared, "I will furnish you with water, but you must reciprocate in kind. You should provide me equal or superior quality water to the water I provide you". Therefore, instead of consuming water, one should relinquish the water intended for their consumption. Or, in exchange for every breath they take, they should offer something to God. But if God were to demand compensation from humanity, what would occur? As a result, he freely distributes everything. No one can repay God's benevolence.

The path of extolling and glorifying the divine

و انکُرُهُ مُسَبِّحًا.[166]

And I invoke remembrance of Him, glorifying Him.

This signifies that I simultaneously extol and glorify Him and simultaneously praise and declare Him utterly exempt from any flaw. My memories are imbued with glorification, and my praise is entwined with praise. I proclaim, "Glory be to my Lord, the Most High." This underscores my endeavor to intertwine glorification with praise, declaring Him devoid of imperfection and adorned with perfection.

I praise Him for the bountiful blessings He has granted us, and I ascribe His Majesty for being ever-awake, omnipotent, and omniscient. With knowledge, power, and His sovereign will, He has bestowed upon us these immense blessings. Therefore, this God deserves all praise - a God who bestows upon humanity with unrequited grace, expecting nothing in return.

اَلحَمدُ لِلّهِ الّذی لا یُهتَکُ حِجابُهُ و لا یُغلَقُ بابُهُ.

Praise belongs to God, the One whose veil is not torn and whose door is never closed.

و لا یُرَدُّ سائِلُهُ.

And the beggar at his door is not turned away.

و لا یُخَیَّبُ آمِلُهُ.

The divine embrace extends to all who seek solace, for He embodies compassion and mercy. No heartfelt desire is lost or forgotten in the vast expanse of creation.

The fathomless depths of God's patience and forbearance transcend the limits of human understanding

و یستُرُ عَلَیَّ کُلَّ عَورَةٍ و انا اعصیه.[167]

He conceals my every fault, and yet I disobey Him.

God is always the Concealer of Faults. The divine veil of purity, an impenetrable shield that protects humanity's essence from the scrutiny of an omniscient gaze, remains forever intact. God, the benevolent Concealer of Faults, steadfastly upholds this veil, safeguarding His creation's secrets, deeds, and hidden vulnerabilities.

A peculiar breed of individuals thrives on conflict and confrontation. Their very existence revolves around seeking out quarrels and engaging in heated exchanges. Their day seems incomplete if they have not had a heated argument or physical altercation. As the sun dips towards the horizon, these restless souls emerge from their lairs, seeking out unsuspecting individuals to unleash their pent-up aggression upon them. Their encounters often start with a barrage of curses and insults, quickly escalating into physical violence. In some cases, weapons may be brandished, adding a dangerous element to their volatile interactions.

One such individual, perpetually seeking a fight to quench his insatiable thirst for conflict, is roaming the streets, his eyes scanning for any potential prey. He spots a calm, composed man, radiating wisdom and serenity. Sensing an easy target, the antagonist approaches him, hoping to provoke a reaction. The calm man, however, remains unfazed by the provocations. The aggressor grows increasingly frustrated, and his attempts to rile the man fall flat. Yet, the calm man observes his demeanor, contrasting the antagonist's escalating aggression. As the antagonist grows more desperate, his insults and curses become more vulgar, and his physical threats more menacing. Yet, the calm man remains unmoved, his silence conveying a profound

sense of dignity and self-assurance. Finally, the antagonist, realizing the futility of his efforts, retreats into the shadows, his thirst for conflict left unsatisfied. The calm man, unaffected by the encounter, continues his journey, his composure a testament to his inner strength and unwavering self-control.

The Divine essence, a beacon of unwavering patience and forbearance, endures humanity's relentless skepticism and doubt. With a thousand and one questions, individuals challenge the very existence of God, seeking to unravel the mysteries of creation and the purpose of life.

These curious minds question the concept of divine revelation, the Prophet's role in divine transmission, the enigma of the Resurrection, and the essence of prayer. They delve into the depths of existence, seeking answers that transcend the realm of human comprehension.

Unfazed by the cacophony of disparaging remarks, the divine essence calmly observes its silence as a testament to its boundless forgiveness. It does not retaliate or succumb to the allure of anger or bitterness. Instead, it offers wisdom and guidance, gently guiding humanity toward a path of righteousness.

The imagery of a tranquil ocean mirrors the boundless patience of God, absorbing the waves of skepticism without flinching. Just as the sea remains unperturbed by the storms that lash its shores, God's essence remains unshaken by the questioning of humanity.

The divine essence, a fount of inexhaustible patience and forbearance, endures the unrelenting onslaught of negativity and malice hurled upon it by humanity. Despite the torrent of accusations and insults leveled against it, the divine essence remains steadfast, His dignity is unshakable, and His compassion is unfailing.

Malevolence does not originate from the divine essence; evil arises from our choices, actions, and reactions to life's challenges. This is the profound wisdom embedded within God's paradoxical cunning.

The door of divine mercy is open to the requests of the wishful

و لا يُغلَقُ بابُهُ.

God's door is always open, welcoming all seeking guidance and solace.

The Divine Gate remains eternally open, a welcoming portal accessible to all, regardless of time or circumstance. God's boundless presence encompasses all of creation, extending from the depths of the cosmos to the smallest atom. This pervasive existence transcends the limitations of time and space, rendering God's door perpetually open, welcoming the heartfelt pleas of those seeking solace, guidance, and wisdom. There is a universality of prayer, a communion not confined to any particular species or form of being. Angels, jinn, humans, animals, and even inanimate objects can all approach the Divine Door. Borrowed from the source of all existence, their existence creates an innate connection with the divine. The absence of a gatekeeper or any restrictive measures symbolizes the unwavering accessibility of God. Unlike earthly portals, God's door requires no permission, no elaborate rituals, and no formalities.

و لا يُرَدُّ سائِلُهُ.

God's boundless compassion and mercy ensure that no heartfelt plea for his blessings goes unheard or unanswered.

Through His infinite compassion and omniscience, God listens attentively to every prayer, regardless of its scale or significance. He rewards those who seek His solace and guidance, bestowing blessings in this earthly realm and the eternal afterlife. Even if a request is not granted immediately, God's divine plan ensures it is fulfilled in the present or future. He may also direct His angels to fulfill the heartfelt desires of His devoted servants.

و لا يُخَيِّبُ آمِلُهُ.

Whoever desires God, He will not disappoint him.

The word "آمِل" signifies a deep desire, yearning, or anticipation. When an individual ardently desires God, the Creator bestows upon them an abundance of His radiant manifestations, leaving them profoundly satiated. This implies that if a person seeks Houris, paradise, the resolution to scientific problems, forgiveness, or any other aspiration, God's generosity will not fail to materialize their wishes.

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِم بِصِحَافٍ مِّن ذَهَبٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ وَأَنتُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ.[168]

In the glorious realm of paradise, God lavishly bestows upon humanity the essence of their deepest yearnings, satiating the insatiable desires of the soul and captivating the senses with the allure of visual splendor.

The immeasurable depths of desire and the boundless pleasures that captivate the eyes cannot fully encompass the extent of God's blessings. He grants each individual according to their yearnings and the visual delights that bring them joy. For those who wholeheartedly seek God, longing for Himself, He bestows Himself upon them. This is because their hearts harbor no desires beyond God, and He never fails to fulfill the hopes of those who seek Him.

The sole sanctuary of truth and the sole redeemer of the righteous

الْحمدُ لِلّه الّذى يُؤمِنُ الخائفين و يُنَجّى الصّالحين و يرفعُ المُستضعفين و يضعُ المُستكبرين و يُهلِكُ مُلوكاً و يستخلِفُ آخرين.[169]

All praise and glory belong to God, the One who shelters and consoles those who tremble with fear in His sanctuary of tranquility and peace, granting them serenity and assurance. He mercifully safeguards the upright and those of pristine hearts from the allure of base desires, the deceit of misguided beliefs, and the snare of unfulfilled ambitions shielding them from harm, affliction, and all forms of evil.

The Exalted God graciously protects the righteous from the allure of immorality, sin, and corruption, even as they navigate a world that presents these temptations. If someone enters a fire from one side and comes out the other side of the fire without being burned by the heat at all, is that not a miracle?

وَإِن مِّنكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا * ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوا وَّنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا.[170]

Verily, all of you shall enter Hell, before which is the appointed term of your Lord. Then, We shall rescue pious people who cast the unjust in humbling torment. And there is not one of you who will pass over it. This is a decree upon your Lord that is decreed. Then, We will save those who feared Allah, leaving the wrongdoers groveling therein.

Upon the revelation of this verse, the Prophet wept profusely, tears soaking his beard. When questioned, "O Messenger of God, will you too enter the Fire?" he replied, "Indeed, yet we shall traverse through it as swiftly as lightning."[171]

The appearance of the desires of worldly life as fire on the day of judgment

In the realm of the Hereafter, the fires that engulf transgressors are a manifestation of the worldly desires that consumed them in this life. These fires represent the searing heat and relentless torment that await those who have succumbed to the allure of fleeting pleasures, neglecting their spiritual essence.

Some individuals, trapped by the pull of the material world, become utterly detached from the divine. Their existence revolves solely around satisfying their earthly desires, indulging their appetites, and seeking power while disregarding the higher purpose of existence. The veil of heedlessness has cast a shroud over their hearts, obscuring their connection with the spiritual realm. Their path diverges from the path of righteousness, leading them toward the fiery depths of eternal damnation. The fire that awaits them is not merely a physical torment but a reflection of the inner turmoil they have cultivated in this life. It is a vivid embodiment of the suffering they have inflicted upon themselves by prioritizing worldly pleasures over spiritual fulfillment. Upon their initiation into this realm, they cultivate a profound aversion to departure and harbor no inclination for relocation. Had it not been for God's decree of death, they would have wished to remain in this world eternally, clinging to their wicked deeds, insatiable lust, willful neglect of their responsibilities, criminal behavior, insatiable pursuit of power, and despicable conduct, emulating the denizens of Hell who have done so for immeasurable eons. Death, however, inevitably arrives and claims them. They committed transgressions for the fleeting pleasures of

this worldly existence, and their intentions have now rendered them disruptive even in hell. They shall dwell in hell and never escape its confines.[172]

The truth of the Ṣirāṭ or the bridge of judgment day

Humanity embarks on a journey, whether they choose to follow the guidance of prophets or not. They traverse their worldly path and eventually meet their end. Alongside their physical existence, their inner selves embark on a continuous odyssey, a quest for self-improvement, whether guided by prophetic teachings or not. This inner journey is an ongoing process of movement and growth. This truth is beyond doubt.

The human journey towards God manifests in the resurrection world as embarked upon in this earthly realm. This is because, as we have learned, all beings and actions of this material world have their metaphysical counterparts in the unseen realm. One such instance is man's spiritual odyssey towards his divine origin, which forms a bridge in the resurrection world.

There is no question that man has traversed this bridge in this world. Since everyone has their bridge in this world, they shall have the same bridge in the Hereafter, in the metaphysical form of that world. The bridge of this world, which governs the world of matter and nature, the world of desires, the world of anger, the world of illusions, and the world of affections, and connects different beings based on these affections, must have a metaphysical form in the Resurrection that manifests the physical form.

Passage of all individuals through hell

Human existence ultimately concludes with the cessation of life. The original manifestation of the world in the hereafter is hell, and the path that man has from the world to heaven is a bridge in hell that he must cross to reach heaven. Everything that separates man from God is hell, and the meaning of the world is not living on earth but living in a world of attachments; every individual who comes into the world has attachments, and the manifestation of these attachments, which separate and distract from God in the hereafter, is hell. In our holy verse: And indeed, all of you will pass over it (the bridge). Then, We will give to those who were pious their rewards with no decrease, and as for those who were unjust, they will cry out, "Would that we had been sent back! Then, we would have believed and not associated anything with our Lord." (Quran 19:71-72)

وَإِن مِّنكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا * ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوا وَّنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا.[173]

وَيَقُولُ الْإِنسَانُ أَإِذَا مَا مِتُّ لَسَوْفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيًّا * أَوَلَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْئًا * فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيَاطِينَ ثُمَّ لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا * ثُمَّ لَنَنزِعَنَّ مِن كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمَٰنِ عِتِيًّا * ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِينَ هُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِهَا صِلِيًّا.[174]

Humanity often questions, "When death takes us, shall we be resurrected to life"? Yet, does humanity not recall that We, the Creator, fashioned them from nothingness? By your Lord, We shall gather them all, alongside the rebellious devils, and present them, kneeling in supplication, around the depths of Hell. Then, from each faction, We shall extract those who defied the Most Compassionate with the most extraordinary intransigence. And We shall, with absolute certainty, identify those who most merit its fiery depths.

وَإِن مِّنكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا.

In a comprehensive and decisive statement, the Quranic verse 19:71 proclaims, 'And there is not one of you but will pass over it.' This universal assertion highlights the inevitable passage of all humanity, including disbelievers, hypocrites, and believers, through the realm of Hell.

A companion once inquired of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): Will you also enter the Fire (Hell)? He replied: Yes, but I will pass through it swiftly, like a flash of lightning! Upon the revelation of this verse, it is narrated that Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, wept so profusely that the ground beneath him became moist. The subsequent verse reads: Then We will rescue those who heeded Us, and leave the wrongdoers in it, cringing. (Qur'an 19:72)

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّقَوا وَّنَذَرُ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا.

Prophet Muhammad's tears were shed on account of the impending fate of his Ummah (nation). The burden of their salvation rested heavily upon his shoulders, and his immense compassion for them compelled him to weep out of mercy for their future.

Now, we must delve into the underlying reason for the universality of Hell's visitation. The crux lies in the notion that Hell in the Hereafter is the manifestation of the worldly realm we inhabit. Prophets, Imams, and Awliyā' – the epitome of spiritual excellence – also graced this earthly domain, thereby partaking in the experience of Hell. Yet, from this very Hell, they must ascend to the celestial haven of Paradise. This is because the world serves as a bridge to the Hereafter, while Hell becomes a stepping stone to Paradise. It is impossible to attain the ultimate bliss of Paradise and the esteemed position of nearness to the Divine without traversing the world and engaging in a relentless struggle against our baser inclinations. Hence, every soul must embark on this earthly journey, endure the trials of Hell, and find salvation in the boundless expanse of Paradise.

The exemplary passage of prophets and Awliyā' over the Ṣirāṭ

Those who navigate the worldly realm akin to prophets, untainted by its allure, impervious to its color and scent, their spouses, children, and worldly pursuits failing to divert them from God's remembrance – they shall traverse the Ṣirāṭ, the Path of Judgment, like a flash of lightning. This aligns with the Holy Verse: We shall save those who had heeded Us and leave the wrongdoers groveling in it.

رِجَالٌ لَّا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَٰرَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ وَإِيتَآءِ ٱلزَّكَوٰةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ ٱلْقُلُوبُ وَٱلْأَبْصَٰرُ.[175]

Men whose trade and business do not distract them from the remembrance of Allah, from establishing prayer, and from paying zakat. They fear a Day when hearts and eyes will be overturned. (Quran 24:37)

The world has not polluted them, nor have they been drawn to it. Hence, as they entered the world, they also left Hell behind. The world's love did not tempt them and has not been polluted, so they have not lingered in this world. Instead, they have passed through it like lightning.

كالبرق الخاطف.

The Prophet of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, resided on Earth for sixty-three years, yet his soul never dwelled in the material realm. The term "world" signifies attachment and affection towards anything other than God and an affinity for its fleeting pleasures and allure. Thus, the Prophet, though physically present on Earth, remained entirely detached from its worldly trappings. Upon his arrival, he embarked on his divine mission without pausing for worldly pursuits, such as leadership, status, wealth, or other distractions that ensnare souls. Instead, he traversed the earthly plane at lightning speed, leaving behind the fleeting draw of the material world.

The world is the realm of appearances, where we focus on illusions and neglect reality. It is a place of darkness and delusion, where we regress from our humanity and live like animals or demons. How much of the Prophet's life was like this? The Prophet never lived for a single minute on the goals and objectives of the world.

The Prophet lived his entire life, from birth to death, focused on the truth and the reality of the hereafter. He was always striving to attain God's pleasure and to guide humanity to the path of salvation.

Have you ever witnessed the sky ablaze with lightning? How swiftly does it strike, illuminating the landscape and momentarily blinding our sight? With that same exhilarating speed, prophets and saints navigate the Ṣirāṭ, leaving behind the realm of earthly temptations and delving into the boundless expanse of paradise.

The quality of the passage of the believers over the Ṣirāṭ

After the prophets, Imams, and saints, other people are at different lower levels and have been attached to the world. Their passage over the Ṣirāṭ is different according to the difference in their levels and their attachment to the world.

Individuals who have embarked on the path of faith and have been subjected to trials and tribulations in their pursuit of the ultimate level of spiritual unity with God, known as tawhid, will traverse the narrow bridge of Ṣirāṭ with the swiftness of the wind.

Some individuals are destined for the hereafter and cannot be categorized among the wretched but rather among the Companions of the Right Hand. They are not sinners either, but they do not possess the profound love, enthusiasm, and attraction of the people of Tawhid, which incinerate illusions and appearances like a spark of fire. They have also embarked on a quest for God, but not with that razor-sharp determination and crushing resolve, nor with that decisive swiftness. These individuals traverse the Ṣirāṭ with the agility of a horseman. The fire does not engulf them; yet, just as a horseman traversing a bridge feels the fire beneath, the Companions of the Right-Hand experience the warmth of the flames as they cross the Ṣirāṭ.

Yet, there are others who, despite being among the Companions of the Right Hand, may not be as pure and immaculate as they could be. They have committed some transgressions and errors, and God has pardoned them. They traverse the bridge at the pace of a man walking.

ٱلَّذِينَ يَجۡتَنِبُونَ كَبَٰٓئِرَ ٱلۡإِثۡمِ وَٱلۡفَوَٰحِشَ إِلَّا ٱللَّمَمَۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَٰسِعُ ٱلۡمَغۡفِرَةِۚ[176]

Yet, those who avoid grave sins and reprehensible acts, save for trivial transgressions and errors, find solace in the boundless expanse of their Lord's forgiveness, O Prophet.

As we intend to elaborate upon in the discourse of intercession, those individuals will ascend to paradise without needing mediation.[177] However, like a man traversing a footbridge, their passage will be more arduous than a horse rider's. They inevitably witness the inferno's blaze and feel its scorching intensity more acutely.

Specific individuals have secured their salvation through unwavering faith despite committing grave sins. These individuals, beneficiaries of divine intercession, traverse the narrow bridge of Ṣirāṭ with a halting gait.

The fate of the wicked and the unbelievers in hell, or their eternal presence in the fire

The wicked and unbelievers will be damned to hell. The duration of their stay in hell is known only to God! The severity of their punishment varies depending on the severity of their sins. They must remain in hell until the fire cleanses and purifies them. One month, two months, one year, two years, ten years, or even a thousand years – only God knows how long! Remember that the Day of Judgment will last fifty thousand years, so they must endure this punishment until then. However, some will remain in hell forever, whose existence has become fire. In the future, we will discuss the characteristics of these eternal dwellers of hell.[178]

Upon their release from hell, those who have been cleansed will bathe in the Pool of Kawthar. This pool is said to be filled with water from heaven and has the power to purge the soul of all sins. Upon their release from hell, those whose sins have been cleansed will bathe in the Pool of Kawthar, and by the grace of the Wilayat, their souls will be purified, ready to enter paradise.

The order of people crossing the bridge in the hereafter

We lack any narration of whether this bridge is positioned above hell or within it. However, the commentator of the aforementioned topics in Majma' al-Bayān quotes Ibn Mas'ud as stating:

عَنْ رَسولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيهِ و آلِهِ و سَلَّمَ، قالَ: «يَرِدُ النّاسُ النّارَ ثُمَّ يَصدُونَ بِأَعمالِهِم؛ فَأَوَّلُهُم كَلَمعِ البَرقِ، ثُمَّ كَمَرِّ الرِّيحِ، ثُمَّ كَحَضرِ الفَرَسِ، ثُمَّ كَالرّاكِبِ، ثُمَّ كَشَدِّ الرَّجُلِ، ثُمَّ كَمَشيِهِ.

According to a narration from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family), he stated that people will enter the fire of hell due to their actions and then exit it. The first to leave

will depart at the speed of lightning, followed by those who leave at the speed of the wind, then those who leave at the speed of a galloping horse, then those who leave like a rider, then those who leave at the speed of a runner, and finally, those who leave at the speed of a walker.[179]

اللهم صل على محمد و آله و سلم.

Translation of verses from al-Iftitāḥ supplication by commentator

الحمد لله قاصم الجبارين، مبير الظالمين، مدرك الهاربين، نكال الظالمين، صريخ المستصرخين، موضع حاجات الطالبين، معتمد المؤمنين.

الحمد لله الذي من خشيته ترعد السماء و سكانها، و ترجف الأرض و عمارها، و تموج البحار و من يسبح في غمراتها.[180]

Exalted is God, the Crusher of the oppressors and the Annihilator of the tyrants, the Savior of those who have been forced to flee their homes and wander in search of refuge and sanctuary due to the oppression and injustice inflicted upon them by the tyrants; the One who brings the oppressors to justice and listens to the cries and pleas of those who seek solace; the sole source of hope and fulfillment for the needy and the suffering, and the steadfast refuge of the faithful.

Praise is due to God, whose majesty the heavens and their celestial bodies tremble, the earth and its inhabitants are shaken, and the seas and their denizens are stirred and churned.

الحمد لله الذي يخلق و لم يخلق، و يرزق و لا يرزق، و يطعم و لا يطعم، و يميت الأحياء و يحي الموتى و هو حي لا يموت، بيده الخير و هو على كل شيء قدير.[181]

Exalted is God, the Creator without being created, the Provider without being sustained, the Nourisher without hunger, and the Giver of life and death, while eternally alive and immortal, untouched by death or nonexistence. From His boundless generosity, goodness and blessings flow to His servants and creatures. He is capable of all things, the All-Powerful.

اللهم صل على محمد عبدك و رسولك و امينك و صفيك و حبيبك و خيرتك من خلقك و حافظ سرك و مبلغ رسالاتك، افضل و احسن و أجمل و اكمل و ازكى و انمى و اطيب و اطهر و اسنى و اكثر ما صليت و باركت و ترحمت و تحننت و سلمت على أحد من عبادك و انبيائك و رسلك و صفوتك و أهل الكرامة عليك من خلقك.

O Gracious Lord, bestow Your peace upon Muhammad, Your servant, Your messenger, the custodian of Your revelation and mission, the chosen one among all Your creation, the most excellent of Your creatures in the realm of existence, the guardian and protector of the universe's secrets and mysteries, and the one who conveyed Your message and wisdom to humanity. May the peace You bestow upon him be more virtuous, more beautiful, more perfect, purer, more sublime, more worthy, more pure, higher, and more abundant than any peace, blessings, mercies, greetings, and peace You bestow upon any of Your pure servants, great prophets, prophets, chosen ones, and those of noble stature and greatness among Your creation.

Session Ten
The Night Of The 21st Of The Holy Month Of Ramadan 1397 AH.

أعوذُ بِالله مِن الشّيطان الرّجيم
بسم الله الرّحمٰن الرّحيم
و صلّى اللهُ علىٰ محمّدٍ و آله الطّاهرين
و لعنةُ الله علىٰ أعدائهم أجمعين مِن الآنَ إلىٰ قيام يوم الدّين.

اللهُمّ و صلِّ علىٰ عليٍّ أميرالمؤمنين و وَصيِّ رَسولِ رَبِّ العالَمين، عَبدِكَ و وَلِيِّكَ و أخي رَسولِكَ و حُجّتِكَ علىٰ خَلقِكَ و آيتِكَ الكُبرىٰ و النّبإ العَظيم.[182]

O Lord of the universe, bestow your boundless mercy upon Amir al-Mu'minin, the Commander of the Faithful, the epitome of faith, the successor of the Prophet Muhammad, your faithful servant, your trusted guardian, the brother of your beloved messenger, the irrefutable proof upon all creation, the embodiment of your divine grace, and the harbinger of your grand revelation.

Elucidation of the appellations "Amir al-Mu'minin (commander of the faithful)" and "Waṣī" (successor)

The term "Amir" signifies "ruler," and "Amr" means "to govern." Amir Al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Faithful) denotes the supreme governor, the wielder of authority, the decree-holder, and the one vested with supreme power over the faithful. This title was conferred upon Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, by the Prophet Muhammad. Following the Ghadir Khum event, all the people called the Imam Amir Al-Mu'minin and pledged allegiance to him as the caliph. The caliphate entails governance over the faithful. Among those who pledged allegiance to him for this caliphate were Umar ibn al-Khattab, Abu Bakr, and others who assembled and pledged allegiance to him.[183]

Burayda b. al-Ḥuṣayb al-Aslamī recounts the events following the demise of Prophet Muhammad: Following the Prophet's passing, I was not in Medina, but in Damascus. When I returned, I was astonished to see Abu Bakr on the pulpit, with a congregation seated in the mosque. I entered and inquired, "Where is Ali?" They replied, "He isn't here". Intrigued, I asked, "Why is Abu Bakr on the pulpit?" They declared, "He is the Caliph of the Muslims!" I pressed, "How is he the Caliph of the Muslims?" To which they responded, "Events unfolded, and now he is the Caliph of the Muslims"! I exclaimed, "Did you not swear allegiance to Ali as the Caliph? I was in that tent when you pledged allegiance to Ali as the Caliph and declared, 'Peace be upon you, O Commander of the Faithful!' O Abu Bakr, Umar, and five others, you seven swore allegiance together! They countered, "Those events have passed, and new ones have emerged. The world is based on events, and a new event has unfolded"! I challenged, "What event has unfolded? By God, you have committed treason and grievous sin in the eyes of God! You approached the Prophet with Amir al-Mu'minin and pledged allegiance to him, only to declare, 'An event unfolded, and a fact occurred'"! In the ensuing turmoil, they assaulted me and ejected me from the mosque.

This narration is attributed to Sunni sources and is mentioned in Sunni histories.[184]

وصيِّ رَسولِ رَبِّ العالَمين.

May God bless Ali, the Commander of the Faithful and the successor of the Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds.

A testator appoints a Waṣī to manage their estate and fulfill their wishes after death. The Waṣī is responsible for implementing the terms of the will.

The preeminence of servitude over wilayah (vicegerency)

عَبدِكَ و وَلِيِّكَ.

He is Your servant and Your vicegerent.

Here, the emphasis is placed on the Imam's servanthood before his vicegerency, mirroring the Quranic reference to Prophet Muhammad.

مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِكَ وَ رَسُولِكَ.

Muhammad, Your servant, and Your messenger.

Both instances underscore the importance of servitude, the foundation for messengership and vicegerency. Servitude precedes vicegerency, signifying that unwavering devotion and obedience to God are prerequisites for assuming the mantle of vicegerency.

وَ وَلِيِّكَ.

A Vicegerent is the one who has the authority and power to carry out God's will in the entire universe. This is the meaning of vicegerent, a prerequisite for the rank of servitude.

Servitude means absolute annihilation, and the prerequisite of absolute annihilation is the manifestation of all the lights of the Lord. The precondition for the manifestation of the lights of God is the bestowal of bounty upon the universe from the heart of the vicegerent of God.

عَبْدِي أَطِعْنِي حَتَّى أَجْعَلَكَ مِثْلِي (أَو: مَثَلِي).[185]

O My servant, obey Me, so that I may make you like Myself.

This means making you a model and example of myself. This happens due to the same purification, refinement, and purity of the heart so that there is no trace of self-display in the person, and he becomes a pure manifestation of God. The prerequisite of being a manifestation of God is the rising of the lights of the Lord in the heart. Those lights are not imaginary or illusory; instead, they are absolute existential lights that rise in the heart in a state of abstraction and simplicity, and from that heart, existence is bestowed upon the entire universe.

The unveiling of the beloved's omnipresence

تَجَلَّى لِيَ الْمَحْبُوبُ فِي كُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ　　　وَ شَاهَدْتُهُ فِي كُلِّ مَعْنىً وَ صُورَةٍ.[186]

The Beloved manifested Himself from every facet, and I beheld Him in every concept and shape.

This is deemed as the absolute universal vicegerency, and this eminence is one of the stations of the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him).

وَ أَخِي رَسُولِكَ.

And the brother of your Prophet.

The prophet's unwavering bond with Imam Ali (peace be upon him): A covenant of brotherhood

In a sincere act of divine affirmation and human connection, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him and his family) established an enduring covenant of brotherhood with Imam Ali (peace be upon him), his closest companion and confidant. This sacred pact, enacted twice in Mecca and Medina,[187] is a testament to the Prophet's unwavering love, trust, and recognition of Imam Ali's unique status within Islam. The authenticity of this covenant rests upon the concept of mutawātir hadith, meaning that it has been narrated by such a vast number of reliable sources that its integrity is beyond dispute. Except for Umar, the brotherhood of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was universally acknowledged.

When the Prophet established a pact of brotherhood among the Muhājirīn and the Ansar in Medina, he paired Abu Bakr with Umar, Uthman with Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, and Salman with Abu Dharr; all of these were from the principle of unity of perspective! The entirety of the Muhājirīn and Ansar became brothers to one another, but the Prophet did not assign a brother to Imam Ali (peace be upon him). Until the process of covenant signing concluded, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was saddened that the Prophet had not designated a brother for him.

Amidst the bustling streets of Medina, Imam Ali found solace in the tranquility of a roadside retreat. Unbeknownst to him, the Prophet approached him, gently tapping his foot to awaken him from his slumber. The Prophet's tone, filled with affection and concern, uttered: Why do you rest in this lonely corner, O Abu Turab? The Imam, startled from his repose, rose to greet the Prophet, whose radiant presence instantly dispelled any lingering fatigue. The Prophet smiled warmly and reassured him, "O Ali, you are my treasured companion, confidante, and brother in this world and the next."[188]

In the aftermath of the Prophet Muhammad's passing, when Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was summoned to the mosque and the ensuing events unfolded, Imam Ali refrained from pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr. Umar exclaimed, "If you do not pledge allegiance, we shall execute you!" To this assertion, the Imam retorted, "In that instance, you will be eradicating the servant of God and the brother of the Prophet". Umar proclaimed, "We uphold your servitude to the Exalted God, yet we refute the assertion of your brotherhood with the Prophet."[189]

Historical records of both Shia and Sunni scholars unanimously attest that no one ever disputed the brotherhood of Imam Ali (peace be upon him).[190] Except for Umar, the brotherhood of Imam Ali with the Prophet was as evident as the sun's radiance. The Prophet declared, "Only an infidel would deny your brotherhood."

وحُجَّتُکَ عَلیٰ خَلقِکَ.

Amir al Mu'minīn; and thou art the proof of thy creation upon thy creation.

In this context, "proof"(Ḥujja) signifies a steadfast standard or benchmark against which all actions and intentions are appraised. Just as a judge in court meticulously examines the arguments presented by the litigants, on the Day of Judgment, the Exalted God will scrutinize the deeds of humanity in the light of the infallible guidance bestowed upon humankind through the Imamate.

Every individual's action and choice will be juxtaposed against the exemplary conduct of the Imam, serving as the ultimate reference point for divine judgment.[191] This means that the Exalted God will evaluate each soul based on their adherence to the principles of the Imamate, as epitomized by the Imam's unwavering obedience to God's commands and his steadfast commitment to justice and compassion.

I have appointed a divine representative for you. Analogously, a monarch who embarks on a journey delegates another individual to oversee his realm, declaring that the delegate's orders are akin to his own. Upon my return, I shall hold you accountable by the delegate's directives. This is the essence of a divinely appointed representative.

"حجتِ الهی "(Celestial Emissary) refers to an individual whom the Exalted God has vested with the authority to serve as His representative. This individual's directives and prohibitions are deemed God's very will. This is the celestial emissary sent forth by God. Hence, this individual's directives, prohibitions, and actions are celestial proof. This is what we refer to as celestial proof. God shall hold His servants accountable for their actions by the directives of this celestial emissary. Any action that individuals perform in God's presence if it aligns with the actions of the celestial emissary, shall be liberated. If not, they shall be apprehended, for this is celestial proof!

و آیَتُکَ الکُبریٰ.

The Commander of the Faithful (Imam Ali) is the quintessential reflection of the Divine Essence, the paramount manifestation of the Divine Presence. A sign is an emblem or an indicator. Imam Ali is the mirror that unveils the Divine Essence, not just one attribute or name.

In their measure, perception, and degree of reflection, all beings manifest God, albeit in varying degrees. A mirror may be small, large, square, rectangular, or even diamond-shaped. One mirror may reflect an image in yellow hues, while another may reveal it in shades of red or green. Some mirrors appear hazy, while others bear the scars of rust and the remnants of mercury that have evaporated. Amidst this diversity, a full-length mirror stands out, portraying the entirety of a person's being. Its pristine surface reflects reality, untainted by yellow, red, or green hues. This mirror unveils the individual's surroundings, not merely their front but also encompassing their back and sides. More remarkably, this mirror not only reflects the physical

form but also the soul, the mind, and the intellect. It is a remarkable mirror indeed! Imam Ali embodies such a reflection of God.

The radiance of existence manifests in a generalized manner in the prophet and in a more detailed form in Imam Ali (peace be upon them)

The feminine form of "الكبرى , al-Kubra" is used because "آيتك , Ayatuka" is feminine. Thus, it is said, "آيتك الكبرى , Ayatuka al-Kubra," which is also referred to as "آية اكبر , Ayat al-Akbar." This signifies that Ali ibn Abi Talib is the most prominent manifestation of Godliness in the cosmos, after the Prophet! The Prophet possesses an instructional facet, while Imam Ali, peace be upon him, takes from the Prophet and unveils it .

Some Sufi scholars have explicitly stated that Imam Ali holds a higher station than the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them both. This notion is a theological error because Imam Ali, peace be upon him, was the Prophet's student and servant,[192] and a profound disparity exists between the Prophet's station and that of Imam Ali.

On the Day of Resurrection, the Prophet will be elevated to the highest echelon, while Imam Ali, peace be upon him, will stand one step below. The Prophet possesses the station of generality, while Imam Ali holds the station of particularity. What Imam Ali possesses, he inherits from the Prophet. The first manifestation of the radiance of existence emanated from the summit of undifferentiation and the pinnacle of annihilation, synonymous with the Prophet's sacred essence and God's most exalted name, unfolded within the mirror of Imam Ali's heart. The mirror of Imam Ali's heart is particular and delineates the intricacies of existence. In contrast, the Prophet's heart mirrors the universe as a whole, and from this grand perspective, the radiance radiates to this full-length mirror of the universe's complexities. Without him, this manifestation would never have occurred.[193] These additional characteristics, if elucidated, would necessitate considerable elaboration.

This signifies that Imam Ali would not have emerged if the Prophet had not graced the world with his presence. However, the converse needs to be more accurate. Had Imam Ali not been born into this realm, the Prophet would still have existed. This is because the Prophet holds the station of the closest veil, while Imam Ali occupies the position of the veil beyond the veil.

Telescopes possess a primary small lens, within which stars remain invisible. The light emanating from this lens cascades into a larger lens, allowing for their manifestation. While stars remain unseen within the small lens, they serve as a crucial conduit for light and grace, rendering their presence indispensable for their illumination in the larger lens. It embodies the essence of a repository and origin. It captures and conveys this light to the larger lens, enabling human perception. The Prophet, in the domain of generality, received illumination from God and bestowed it upon Imam Ali, who then elucidated its profound meaning.

The Prophet Muhammad was not a prolific preacher and delivered only a few short sermons throughout his lifetime. In contrast, Imam Ali was renowned for his eloquence and delivered lengthy sermons that captivated audiences for hours. His sermons, compiled in Nahj al-Balāghah, are a testament to his mastery of the spoken word and his profound understanding of Islamic teachings. While the Prophet Muhammad was the source of Imam Ali's knowledge, Imam Ali was the conduit through which this knowledge resonated with the masses.

Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad, who never unsheathed his sword against anyone throughout his lifetime. However, the sword of Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, never left his hand. Not that the Prophet never killed, for all these killings were the Prophet's victories, but in all the battles, Ali ibn Abi Talib was by the Prophet's side, and Ali was at the Prophet's hand! It was the Prophet's opinion and the Prophet's command! In this way, the Prophet holds a collective position, and the Commander of the Faithful holds a detailed position.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the fountainhead, and Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace and blessings be upon him, is the flowing stream. This flowing stream originates from the fountainhead; it flows and quenches the thirst of all worlds, but it is derived from that source alone! Imam Ali pays attention to the heart of the Prophet, and then the ocean of knowledge bursts forth from his heart and surges and boils.

The emanation of Gabriel's knowledge from the commander of the faithful

Abundant narrations from the Shia and Sunni traditions recount that The Prophet imparted to Ali ibn Abi Talib a thousand portals of knowledge. From each portal, a thousand gates of knowledge were unlocked.[194]

This is just a metaphor, not that there were a thousand gates. What is a thousand anyway? The Prophet's heart is the source from which knowledge flows, and then it descends into the heart of the Commander of the Faithful and is expanded and elaborated upon. All the sciences that you can imagine are contained within this knowledge. If even Gabriel, the angel tasked with delivering divine revelation, wishes to acquire knowledge, he must turn to the Commander of the Faithful for instruction. This is because the Prophet and the Commander of the Faithful's rank are higher than Gabriel's, and Gabriel is merely a conduit of divine grace. The rank of knowledge travels from the Prophet's essence to his heart, just as when you sit down to think, contemplate, and analyze, using your internal power to unravel mysteries and solve problems. That intermediary on the blessed heart of the Prophet is Gabriel.

Then, Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, is a manifestation of divine revelation, and the Prophet is also a manifestation, but a manifestation that only Ali can fully comprehend. Is attaining the exalted station of the Prophet effortless? Does everyone grasp the Prophet's essence and message?

The Prophet Muhammad was entrusted with conveying the divine message of the Quran to humanity, while Ali ibn Abi Talib was tasked with expounding its profound and intricate meanings.

The Prophet of Islam was the focal point of the Quran's revelation. He addressed the entirety of humanity, urging them to embrace both the Quran and his message. They readily responded with, "Yes!" yet the passage questions their understanding of the Prophet. If any individual professes faith, the Prophet acknowledges their proclamation, even if they harbor hypocrisy. The Prophet's mission is to disseminate God's message, not delve into human hearts' depths.

On the other hand, only Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, holds a profound comprehension of the Prophet's essence.[195] Ali's interpretations unveil and illuminate the truths that emanate from the Prophet. He discerns the hypocrites and distinguishes them from genuine devotees, a task entrusted to him, not the Prophet.[196] Ali's responsibility is to determine the true believers from the insincere. The authority of Ali, wilayat, is akin to a touchstone, a stone used to assay the purity of gold. When gold is rubbed against a touchstone, it leaves an imprint, revealing the metal's genuineness.

يا علی، انا قاتلت علی التنزيل، و انت تقاتلهم علی التأويل.[197]

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated, "O Ali, I fought on the revelation, and you will fight them on the interpretation".

The ascension of the commander of the faithful to the pinnacle of spiritual excellence while maintaining the rank of servitude and discipleship to the prophet

In summary, Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Commander of the Faithful, was a devout student of the Prophet Muhammad. Ali's humility and devotion to the Prophet were unwavering, and he eagerly sought guidance and knowledge from his esteemed teacher.

Some individuals, however, misinterpret this relationship, elevating Ali's status beyond that of a mere disciple. They cite an instance where the Prophet, preparing to purify the Kaaba of idols, asked Ali to stand on his shoulders to reach the sacred site. They argue that this act implies Ali's superiority over the Prophet. This interpretation is fundamentally flawed.

Consider a parent embracing their young child. Does the child's position surpass that of the parent? When the Prophet stood tall and proclaimed, 'I am the pillar! Ali, ascend my shoulder and shatter those idols,' his words carried profound significance. It signified Ali's reliance on the Prophet's existence, the Kaaba's sustenance from his guidance, and the dismantling of idolatry as a consequence of his leadership. The Prophet raised Ali, not just physically, but also in stature, introducing him to the world as his rightful successor. The Prophet was the 'introducer,' and Ali was the 'introduced'.

May God forbid a person's thoughts and opinions become the sole judge of their understanding. When the thread of truth is severed, they are left to weave their fabric of distortion, fabrication, and absurdity. The human mind is a fertile ground for these nonsensical creations.

Ali ibn Abi Talib proclaimed: I would eagerly pursue the Prophet like a young camel, seeking knowledge from his boundless reservoir. Every passing day, he would unlock a new portal of wisdom, illuminating my path.[198]

Yet, some dare to assert that Ali surpasses the Prophet. Such a notion is utterly erroneous. When one aims to praise another, they ought not to commend them to the point where the praise becomes a veiled critique! If we elevate Ali above the Prophet, we have diminished and fractured his stature. It is not praise we bestow upon him but rather a subtle form of disparagement.

All believers rely on the Imamate, and the Imam relies on the Prophethood. The narration that I read from the pulpit a few days ago, in which Amir al-Mu'minin says: The Prophet told me: "O Ali, go to the people and inform them: Whoever is disobedient to his parents is cursed by God! Then he said: I and you are the fathers of this nation.[199]

The divinely ordained flow of divine grace continues unabated, even now. This celestial light of existence emanates from the sacred realm of the Exalted God, channeled through the Prophet Muhammad. From the Prophet, it reaches the heart of the Imam, and from the Imam, it cascades down to every individual, permeating the material realm as well. All creation, from the celestial beings to the tiny elements, partakes in this continuous stream of divine bounty.

و النَّبا العَظيم؛
عَمَّ يَتَساءَلُون
عَن النَّبَإِ الْعَظيم.[200]

And the great news!
Of what are they asking?
Of the great news!

Ibn-Nubāta proclaims: Despite relentless endeavors to snuff out the radiant light of Ali, their efforts proved futile. Instead, a collective lament joined the chorus of the Final Judgment.[201]

Nubāta seeks to elucidate the profound significance of the phrase (ألنَّبَإِ ألعَظيم) often interpreted as "the grand tidings" or "the momentous occasion." The resounding cry of the Day of Judgment is an event of immense magnitude, marked by a symphony of sounds, celestial beauty, and divine radiance. This extraordinary day encapsulates the ultimate division between heaven and hell. The cry that augmented the Day of Judgment's tumultuous clamor arose when Ali ibn Abi Talib, the first Imam in Shia Islam, was introduced to humanity. His detractors relentlessly sought to obscure his brilliance, but their efforts proved futile. Instead, he emerged repeatedly, illuminating the world with the stark contrast between paradise and perdition.

He is the embodiment of paradise for the faithful and their beloved and the embodiment of hell for the unbelievers and polytheists. He possesses two hands: one hand of fire and one hand of fragrant flowers. He extends the fragrance of flowers to the faithful, saying, 'Please inhale this fragrance and enter paradise!' And he commands the fire, saying, 'O Hell, engulf him! The Commander of the Faithful is not a tender, compassionate individual... nay! He is the judge of heaven and hell.[202]

The Prophet Elijah eulogized the attributes of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, with eloquence. On the morning of the twenty-first day, when Ali's children returned from his grave, they observed an older man approaching them and standing before them. He initiated his salutations to Ali, uttering the following words: He was a benevolent father to the believers, yet a wrathful and harsh one to the infidels! (This encapsulates the essence of wilayah or divinely appointed leadership). After that, he vanished into thin air. When the children inquired about his identity, they were informed it was the Prophet Elijah.[203]

Individuals who solely display love or anger exhibit a limited emotional range. True emotional maturity necessitates the expression of a broader spectrum of feelings, including anger and compassion.

The wrath and anger of the commander of the faithful amid his compassion and kindness

At the beginning of the Iftitāḥ supplication, we read:

[أرحم الراحمين] فی مَوضِعِ العَفو، و الرَّحمَةِ، أشَدُّ المُعاقِبينَ فی مَوضِعِ النَّکالِ و النَّقِمَةِ، أعظَمُ المُتَجَبِّرِينَ فی مَوضِعِ الکِبریاءِ و العَظَمَةِ.

Amir al-Mu'minin, in the Battle of Ṣiffīn on the Night of Harir, at the side of the Prophet, kills the infidels, the polytheists, and the opposition, for those who are obstinate are like cancer and gangrene that have taken over humanity and must be removed. On the other hand, his mercy, compassion, and kindness are so great that they cannot be counted!

'Adī bin Ḥātim says to Mu'awiya about the attributes of Amir al-Mu'minin:

لا یَخافُ القَوِیُّ ظُلمَهُ و لا یَیأسُ الضَّعیفُ مِن عَدلِه.[204]

The powerful do not tremble before his tyranny, and the weak do not despair of his equity.

The tyrant who inflicted injustice upon another did not cower before Ali's unwavering justice, and the oppressed individual never succumbed to despair in their pursuit of their rightful due.

When an individual seeks to chastise a despot fueled by hatred or envy, even if driven by the despot's injustice, they will inflict a double punishment. Ali was not of this nature. He meted justice to every tyrant who perpetrated injustice without allowing personal sentiments to sway his judgments. As a result, no tyrant feared Ali's injustice, for Ali was not an unjust man. The retribution he exacted from the infidels and the oppressors was commensurate with their deeds. No feeble individual lost hope of obtaining justice from Ali, for they knew he would uphold their rights if they approached Ali. This is because his leadership was divine, a governance inspired by God.

علیٌّ قَسیمُ الجَنَّةِ و النّار.[205]

Ali is the divider of paradise and hell.

Mufaḍal bin 'Umar said to Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him): My heart is heavy! Please explain to me how Ali is the divider of Paradise and Hell.

The Imam delivered a discourse, and Mufaḍal exclaimed, "May God bless your father; you have brought me solace"! That discourse of the Imam resonated with Mufaḍal's preferences and intellectual inclinations. Where does the Imamate of Amir al-Mu'minin reside? On the Day of Resurrection, Amir al-Mu'minin assumed his position and declared: "O Paradise, embrace those destined to be within your realm! And O Hell, receive"!

Amir al-Mu'minin is not a mere human standing two meters tall on the Day of Resurrection. He embodies the Imamate of God!

Qualities of the perfect man and the true jurist

A distinguishing characteristic of the consummate individual and the true jurist is their ability to embody a harmonious blend of attributes, seamlessly transitioning from forgiveness and kindness to sternness and discipline. This adaptability reflects the divine essence, encompassing God's merciful and just attributes.

The perfect man can dole out rewards and administer punishments, offering solace and guidance through compassionate sermons while wielding the necessary tools to enforce justice. They are not confined to a single facet of their being but embody a dynamic equilibrium that aligns with the multifaceted nature of divine wisdom.

In contrast, individuals who solely fixate on fear or hope, devoid of the counterbalance afforded by the opposing virtue, fall short of attaining true perfection. This imbalance parallels an incomplete understanding of the divine character, as God's essence encompasses mercy and justice, simultaneously inviting repentance and upholding righteousness.

عن أمیرالمؤمنین علیه السّلام: «ألا اُخبِرُکُم بالفَقیه کُلِّ الفَقیه؟! مَن لَم یُقَنِّطِ النّاسَ مِن رَحمَةِ الله، و لَم یؤمِنهُم مِن عذابِه.[206]

Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) said: Would you like to know the jurist of all jurists? It is the one who neither despairs people of God's mercy nor assures them of His protection from His punishment.

A jurist who has attained the pinnacle of jurisprudence neither despairs people of God's mercy nor instills in them a false sense of security from His retribution. In other words, he does not grant them excessive hope to the point of recklessness in committing sins. He must perpetually maintain a balance between these two extremes. He must expose them to both the torments of hell and the delights of paradise, the sword of justice and the sweetness of chocolate. He must both evoke tears of sorrow and laughter of joy in their hearts.

The entire universe is akin to this! To survive, we require all elements; we need water and fire. Consequently, the fact that Imam Ali is an excellent tiding implies that a resounding voice has seized control of all realms; the truth is that Imam has infiltrated every nook and cranny!

و صلِّ علی الصدّیقة الطّاهرة.[207]

O Lord, send blessings and mercy upon the pure and virtuous one.

al-Ṣiddīqah (الصدّيقة) signifies the woman who is truthful and righteous. This implies that, besides being truthful, she harbors no element of falsehood in her essence; she is exceedingly truthful!

الطّاهرة.

al-Ṭāhirah (الطّاهرة) denotes purity, as exemplified in the Qur'anic verse:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ ٱلرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا.[208]

Verily, Allah intends to remove any impurity from you, O People of the House, and to purify you thoroughly .

God has purified these individuals. God does not re-render unclean anyone He has purified, nor does He reclaim a medal He has bestowed, for He is self-sufficient.

الصدّيقة الطّاهرة.

عن علیّ بن ابی‌طالب علیهما السّلام، قال: سمعتُ رسولَ اللهِ صلّی اللهُ علیه و اله و سلّم یقول:] «إنّما سمّیت فاطمةُ فاطمةً، لأنّها فُطِمَت هی و شیعتُها و ذریّتُها من النّار.[209]

Who is "The Faithful and Pure"? She is Fatima, the one who will be a barrier between her Shi'as and Hell.

Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) said: I heard from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) that Fatima was bestowed with the name 'Fatima' as she acts as a barrier between herself, her Shi'a followers, and her descendants, shielding them from the scorching flames of Hell.

The word 'Fatima' signifies 'the separator.' Whoever embraces the Shia faith as their guiding path, their connection with the fires of Hell is severed. The very notion of a Shia follower approaching Hell is inconceivable. The Shia and the fires of Hell are simply incompatible!

سیّدة نساء العالمین.[210]

The Supreme Lady of Women.

Fatima is the supreme lady and leader of all women throughout the realms. It is narrated that Lady Mary was the supreme lady of her women, Lady Asiya was the supreme lady of her women, yet Fatima is the supreme lady of all women. When all the world's women gather on the Day of Judgment, she shall be their supreme lady.[211]

Sayyidah (سَيِّدَة) is the feminine form of "Sayyid." "Sayyid" denotes "master" or "great," while "sayyidah " refers to an exceptional woman who possesses an authoritative position and is superior in every aspect.

وَ صَلِّ عَلَى سِبْطَيِ الرَّحْمَةِ.
وَ إِمَامَيِ الْهُدَى.

O Allah, send blessings upon the two grandsons of mercy, two children who are the two grandsons of mercy."

وَ إِمَامَيِ الْهُدَى.

The two leaders of guidance.

الْحَسَنِ وَ الْحُسَيْنِ.

Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn.

They are not world leaders, killing and plundering, or fame and glory. They are leaders in the realm of guidance. حسن means "good," and حسين also means "good." However, because Imam Husayn was younger, his goodness was smaller than his brother, so they named him حسن (which is the diminutive form of the same root).

سَيِّدَيْ شَبَابِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ.[212]

The two masters of the youth of Paradise.

إِنَّ أبابكر و عمر سَيِّدَا شَبَابِ أهلِ الجَنَّةِ.[213]

Abu Bakr and Umar are the two masters of the older men of paradise.
Paradise is not a place for older adults because they have lost their strength. Paradise is a place for the young and the vigorous. These poor people tried to make up a narration but were caught in their lies.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, had a knack for lighthearted humor that often gently guided and inspired those around him. On one occasion, he playfully remarked to an elderly woman, "Old people cannot enter Paradise!" The woman's heart sank, but the Prophet quickly followed with a comforting assurance, "On the contrary, God will restore the youth of all who enter Paradise,[214] ensuring that they experience eternal beauty and vitality.

Once, a woman approached the Prophet and expressed her grievances regarding her husband. The Prophet listened attentively and inquired, "Is your husband the one whose fair complexion surpasses his darker features?" The woman responded, "O Messenger of God, I am unsure!" The Prophet promptly instructed her, "Then go and observe!" She complied and gazed upon her husband's countenance, scrutinizing his features with renewed scrutiny. Upon witnessing his countenance, her animosity dissipated, and reconciliation ensued between the couple. Indeed, the Prophet sought to foster harmony and concord between them.[215]

سَيِّدَيْ شَبَابِ أهلِ الجَنَّةِ.[216]

No older adults are in heaven, nor are there any older women. They would be worthless in paradise! The houris of paradise are not old! We have never heard of a hunchbacked or humpbacked houri! Paradise would be transformed into hell if older women with the same qualities were to appear in paradise.

The hadith that they wished to fabricate was something like this: “Indeed, Abu Bakr and Umar are the leaders of the elderly inhabitants of the fire!” Because in hell, there are many of these elderly men, hunchbacks, and those with back pains, who suffer from festering ears and blindness, and their spinal cords are filled with pus and fire. For hell is the dwelling place of all evil and ugliness! All good and beauty belong to paradise, and their opposites belong to hell.

The leadership of the immaculate imams over all Muslims, both believers and deniers

وَ صَلِّ عَلَى أَئِمَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.

Send prayers and blessings upon the Imams and leaders of Muslims.

These are not only the leaders of the believers and the Imams of the Shiites, but they are the Imams of all Muslims, whether they accept it or not. Ali ibn al-Husayn; "the fourth Imam" and

Muhammad ibn Ali; "the Imam al-Baqir whose name is Muhammad" and Ja'far ibn Muhammad; "the Imam al-Sadiq" and Musa ibn Ja'far and Ali ibn Musa; "the Imam al-Kazim and the Imam al-Reza" and Muhammad ibn Ali; "the Imam al-Taqi" and Ali ibn Muhammad; "the Imam Ali al-Naqi" and al-Hasan ibn Ali; "the Imam al-Hasan al-Askari" and al-khalaf al-hadi-al-Mahdī; "the one who follows the Imam al-Hasan al-Askari and his successor, who is the guide, the Mahdī, and the guided.

Imam Mahdī is the divinely guided, the one who possesses divinely ordained guidance. Thus, he can guide.

أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّن لَا يَهِدِّي إِلَّا أَن يُهْدَى فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ؟

Is it better for a person to follow someone who guides people to the truth or someone who does not unless God's guidance first guides them? (The guided one can guide.) Therefore, the Mahdī is the one whom God guides. He has been given guidance by God and is under God's control. All of his affairs are in God's hands. The discovery of this type of guidance would make guiding people less significant and easier.

Imam Mahdī is more famous by the title of Mahdī than by the title of Hadi, even though Hadi is also one of his titles. Hadi, al-Khalaf al-Saleh, and al-Muntaqim are titles of Imam Mahdī. The late Nūrī, in his book Najm al-Thāqib, has listed one hundred and eighty-two titles for Imam Mahdī.[217] However, the most famous of these is Mahdī, or "the one whom God guides." All aspects of Imam are pure: his appearance, his inner self, and his will,

حُجَجِكَ عَلَى عِبَادِكَ؛

This is Your proof for Your servants.

وَ أُمَنَائِكَ فِي بِلَادِكَ.[218]

They are your trustees in your cities and provinces.

صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِكَ وَ رَسُولِكَ وَ أَمِينِكَ.

The term "amin" signifies "trustworthy." In the same manner as the Prophet was trustworthy, these individuals are reliable within your territories. He is secure if an individual entrusts his affairs to them, and they will shield him. Conversely, if an individual approaches the other, they will eliminate him, as they are at odds with the trustees, implying they are traitors. The Prophet said: Come, board the ship of my household, for it will take you to your destination.

مَثَلُ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي فِيكُمْ كَسَفِينَةِ نُوحٍ؛ مَنْ رَكِبَ فِيهَا نَجَى وَ مَنْ تَخَلَّفَ عَنْهَا غَرِقَ.[219]

My family's example among you is like the ark of Noah: whoever boards it will be saved, and whoever remains behind will drown.

The ship is meant to save people because God has blessed it. The Ark of Noah was a ship built by God's command. Whoever boards this ship will be saved from all harm: himself, his wife, his children, his life, his possessions, his world, and his life span. His intellect, heart, and afterlife will also be blessed with all the divine blessings. However, if he does not board this ship, he will drown and be destroyed.

No one other than the Imam is trustworthy. If you entrust your property to someone unreliable, what will that person do with it? Or if you entrust your life to someone unreliable, what will that person do? They will wait to plunder your wealth and your lives and exploit them to the fullest extent possible. This is because the unreliable person is motivated by greed and betrayal, while the Imam is guided by righteousness and trustworthiness. The unreliable person seeks power for personal gain, while the Imam seeks power to fulfill God's will. This is a fundamental distinction. These Imams are the stewards of your lands and the custodians of your rights.

صَلَاةً كَثِيرَةً دَائِمَةً.[220]

Impart upon them an abundance of enduring compassion and all the compassion that You possess.

The meaning of Imam Mahdī's uprising in the occultation era

اللهم و صل على ولي أمرك القائم.[221]

Send blessings upon your leader, who has the authority to rule and is now present.

The statement that the Imam will rise later is inaccurate. His Holiness has already ascended, and all worldly matters are now under his control. It is only that we fail to grasp this reality, but we will come to understand it eventually.

The Imam holds dominion over the visible and invisible realms, and divine unity is imbued upon every particle of the cosmos through his agency. Even the most insignificant object, like a pebble, cannot change its predetermined course without the Imam's will. Therefore, when the Imam manifests, this fundamental reality will be unveiled. He will not acquire the capacity to perform such extraordinary feats at that juncture, but rather, he will always possess this inherent power. Nor will his actions differ at that time; it is merely that his extraordinary capabilities will become manifest in our perception. In either case, the reins of this cosmic order rest solely in his hands. It will be a world of revelation, not merely a world of power in that era. In other words, it will become abundantly evident to us that this is a realm of possibility within the Imam's domain, a reality that remains obscured from us at present.

المؤمل.

The one who is the object of hope and desire for all.

و العدل المنتظر.

And that Imam, who is just, is awaited by the people.

Helping Imam Mahdī by the archangels and the holy spirit

و حفه بملائكتك المقربين.

Encircle him and surround him with your closest angels, all of whom are his servants and attendants.

Peers and friends accompany the bride, and a king is surrounded by his ministers and dignitaries when traveling. Nevertheless, the Imam of the Age (may God hasten his reappearance) will not have such an entourage. O God, protect him and surround him with Your closest angels! Gabriel will stand on one side, Michael on the other, Israfil on the third, and Azrael on the fourth. These angels hold dominion over all celestial realms and are from this world. Each of these angels is transformed into two angels in that world, resulting in a total of eight angels:

و يحمل عرش ربك فوقهم يومئذ ثمانية.[222]

On that day, eight angels will bear the throne of your Lord on their heads.

و حفه بملائكتك المقربين.

All the angels who are close to You are His directors and agents. They are attentive to and obey whatever command or prohibition He issues.

و أيده بروح القدس.[223]

And strengthen him with the Ruh al-Qudus (The Holy Spirit).

The celestial hierarchy is such that the closest angels of God, those of supreme power and influence, were not under the command of any prophet other than our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)! While other prophets were guided and assisted by angels, they did not possess the authority to command those celestial beings, especially the most exalted ones like Gabriel and the Holy Spirit. This privilege was exclusive to Prophet Muhammad.

We recounted yesterday how the heart of Ḥaḍrat Yunus (peace be upon him) was moved, prompting a world-altering transformation. Similar occurrences transpired during the lives of

Hadrat Hud, Hadrat Saleh, Hadrat Moses, and Hadrat Lot (peace be upon them). Divinely guided angels primarily instigated these transformative shifts.

Despite their exalted positions, the two supreme angelic beings, Gabriel and the Ruh al-Qudus (Holy Spirit), are not readily submissive to anyone. Their unwavering allegiance is reserved for the one who embodies the ultimate sign and the most profound divine message. This individual stands in parity with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Translation of selected passages from the holy prayer of opening by the commentator

اللهُمَّ اجعَلهُ الدّاعیَ إلیٰ کِتابِکَ و القائِمَ بِدینِکَ، استَخلِفهُ فی الأرضِ کَما استَخلَفتَ الّذینَ مِن قَبلِهِ، مَکِّن لَهُ دینَهُ الّذی ارتَضَیتَهُ لَهُ، أبدِلهُ مِن بَعدِ خَوفِهِ أمناً، یَعبُدُکَ لا یُشرِکُ بِکَ شَیئاً.[224]

O Compassionate Lord, make him a caller to Your Book and a guardian and protector of Your religion and law. Grant him dominion and authority over the earth, as You have granted to some of Your servants before him. Establish for him a religion and a way of life that pleases You and makes him secure and safe from the fear of his enemies and oppressors. Let him worship You in the truest sense of servitude and not fear any obstacle in Your worship.

اللهُمَّ أعِزَّهُ و أعزِز بِهِ، و انصُرهُ و انتَصِر بِهِ، و انصُرهُ نَصراً عَزیزاً و افتَح له فتحاً یسیراً، و اجعَل لهُ مِن لَدُنکَ سُلطاناً نَصیراً. اللهُمَّ أظهِر بِهِ دینَکَ و سُنَّةَ نَبِیِّکَ، حَتّی لا یَستَخفیَ بِشَیءٍ مِنَ الحَقِّ مَخافَةَ أحَدٍ مِنَ الخَلقِ. اللهُمَّ إنّا نَرغَبُ إلَیکَ فی دَولَةٍ کَریمَةٍ، تُعِزُّ بِها الإسلامَ و أهلَهُ و تُذِلُّ بِها النِّفاقَ و أهلَهُ، و تَجعَلُنا فیها مِنَ الدُّعاةِ إلی طاعَتِکَ و القادَةِ إلی سَبیلِکَ، و تَرزُقُنا بِها کَرامَةَ الدُّنیا و الآخِرَةِ.

O Compassionate Lord, we, the entire community of Shi'as, beseech You to grant him glory and honor and to grant us glory and honor through the power of his Imamate. Help him and give us victory through the power of his Wilayah. Grant him such assistance within the borders of his authority and government that no weakness or defeat may enter it. Grant him an easy conquest that does not cause him any pain or difficulty. Grant him strength and support from Yourself so that he may not be followed by weakness or laziness.

O Compassionate Lord, unveil Your religion and the Sunnah of Your Prophet through the capable hands of the Imam so that not a single fragment of truth and its practice remains concealed due to the trepidation or apprehension of any of Your creation.[225]

O Compassionate Lord, we, the entire community of Shi'as, beseech You with supplication and petition from the depths of our hearts to bring about a blessed era in which You exalt Islam and its supporters and humiliate hypocrisy and its followers. Make us among those who call to obedience and among their leaders to Your path. For this reason, grant us the highest blessings and the treasures of Your generosity in this world and the hereafter.[226]

اللهُمَّ ما عَرَّفتَنا مِنَ الحَقِّ فَحَمِّلناهُ، و ما قَصُرنا عَنهُ فَبَلِّغناهُ. اللهُمَّ المُم بِهِ شَعثَنا، و اشعَب بِهِ صَدعَنا، و ارتُق بِهِ فَتقَنا، و کَثِّر بِهِ قِلَّتَنا، و أعِزَّ بِهِ ذِلَّتَنا، و أغنِ بِهِ عائِلَنا، و اقضِ بِهِ عَن مَغرَمِنا، و اجبُر بِهِ فَقرَنا، و سُدَّ بِهِ خَلَّتَنا، و یَسِّر بِهِ عُسرَنا، و بَیِّض بِهِ وُجوهَنا، و فُکَّ بِهِ أسرَنا، و أنجِح بِهِ طَلِبَتَنا، و أنجِز بِهِ مَواعیدَنا، و استَجِب بِهِ دَعوَتَنا، و أعطِنا بِهِ فَوقَ رَغبَتِنا.

O Compassionate Lord, we are grateful for the truths You have revealed us. Please help us to remain steadfast in these truths and to grow in our understanding of them. Forgive us for our ignorance and grant us the knowledge and experience that we need to live a life that is pleasing to You. O Compassionate Lord, by the grace of that revered soul, unite our scattered and disordered affairs and regulate our fragmentation and dispersion. Remove the differences and disputes between us and increase our small number. Transform our setbacks into triumphs and grant our household security through his grace and benevolence. Compensate for our losses, remove our poverty, and repair our shortcomings. Remove our troubles and honor us in the eyes of the people. Rescue our captives, fulfill our requests and demands, fulfill our promises, and bring our desires to the point of realization. Grant us even more than we desire and ask for, for You are the Most Generous and the Most Bountiful.

یا خیرَ المسئولینَ و أوسعَ المعطینَ! اشفِ بِهِ صدورَنا و أذهِب بِهِ غیظَ قلوبِنا، و اهدِنا بِهِ لِما اختُلِفَ فیهِ
مِنَ الحقِّ بإذنِکَ، إنَّکَ تهدی مَن تشاءُ إلی صراطٍ مستقیمٍ؛ و انصُرنا علی عدوِّکَ و عدوِّنا. إلهَ الحقِّ،
آمین!

O Generous Lord, You are the most benevolent of those asked, and Your bounty surpasses any other bestower. By the grace of that noble Imam, soothe the afflicted hearts of Your faithful servants and banish the hatred, hostility, and bitterness that divide them. In moments of bewilderment, confusion, and doubt, guide them through the presence of that revered soul onto the righteous path of truth and justice. Only Your divine essence can illuminate the way for those You choose to enlighten. Grant us victory over those who oppose You and our adversaries. O True Lord, bestow upon us Your mercy and guidance.

اللهمَّ إنّا نشکو إلیکَ فقدَ نبیِّنا صلواتک علیه و آله، و غیبةَ إمامِنا و کثرةَ عدوِّنا و قلّةَ عددِنا، و شدّةَ
الفِتَنِ بنا، و تظاهُرَ الزّمانِ علینا! فصلِّ علی محمّدٍ و آلِ محمّدٍ، و أعِنّا علی ذلکَ بفتحٍ منکَ
تعجِّلُهُ، و بضُرٍّ تکشِفُهُ، و نصرٍ تعِزُّهُ، و سلطانِ حقٍّ تظهِرُهُ، و رحمةٍ منکَ تجلِّلُناها، و عافیةٍ
منکَ تلبِسُناها؛ برحمتِکَ یا أرحمَ الرّاحمین.[227]

O Compassionate Lord, in our sorrow for the passing of our Prophet, upon whom be peace and blessings, and in the absence of our guiding Imam, we seek solace and refuge in Your divine embrace. We humbly implore Your assistance amidst the multitude of our adversaries, our meager numbers, the relentless trials of our times, and the unfavorable winds of change that assail us. Therefore, bestow upon Muhammad and his lineage Your most bountiful blessings. Grant us the triumphal victory over our foes, liberate us from harm and loss, and usher in an era of glory and honor where the reign of truth reigns supreme. Clothe us in the mantle of Your boundless mercy and envelop us in the garment of well-being and the rectification of our affairs. O Most Merciful of the Merciful, grant us solace and guidance in Your benevolence.

دعاء الافتتاح

اللّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَفْتَتِحُ الثَّناءَ بِحَمْدِكَ، وَأَنْتَ مُسَدِّدٌ لِلصَّوابِ بِمَنِّكَ، وَأَيْقَنْتُ أَنَّكَ أَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرّاحِمِينَ فِي مَوْضِعِ العَفْوِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ، وَأَشَدُّ المُعاقِبِينَ فِي مَوْضِعِ النَّكالِ وَالنَّقِمَةِ، وَأَعْظَمُ المُتَجَبِّرِينَ فِي مَوْضِعِ الكِبْرِياءِ وَالعَظَمَةِ. اللّهُمَّ أَذِنْتَ لِي فِي دُعائِكَ وَمَسْأَلَتِكَ، فَاسْمَعْ يا سَمِيعُ مِدْحَتِي، وَأَجِبْ يا رَحِيمُ دَعْوَتِي، وَأَقِلْ يا غَفُورُ عَثْرَتِي، فَكَمْ يا إِلهِي مِنْ كُرْبَةٍ قَدْ فَرَّجْتَها، وَهُمُومٍ قَدْ كَشَفْتَها، وَعَثْرَةٍ قَدْ أَقَلْتَها، وَرَحْمَةٍ قَدْ نَشَرْتَها، وَحَلْقَةِ بَلاءٍ قَدْ فَكَكْتَها، الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ صاحِبَةً وَلا وَلَداً (وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي المُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الذُّلِّ وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِيراً)؛ الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ بِجَمِيعِ مَحامِدِهِ كُلِّها، عَلى جَمِيعِ نِعَمِهِ كُلِّها، الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الَّذِي لا مُضادَّ لَهُ فِي مُلْكِهِ، وَلا مُنازِعَ لَهُ فِي أَمْرِهِ. الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الَّذِي لا شَرِيكَ لَهُ فِي خَلْقِهِ، وَلا شَبِيهَ لَهُ فِي عَظَمَتِهِ. الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الفاشِي فِي الخَلْقِ أَمْرُهُ وَحَمْدُهُ، الظّاهِرِ بِالكَرَمِ مَجْدُهُ، الباسِطِ بِالجُودِ يَدَهُ، الَّذِي لا تَنْقُصُ خَزائِنُهُ، وَلا تَزِيدُهُ كَثْرَةُ العَطاءِ إِلاّ جُوداً وَكَرَماً إِنَّهُ هُوَ العَزِيزُ الوَهّابُ. اللّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ قَلِيلاً مِنْ كَثِيرٍ، مَعَ حاجَةٍ بِي إِلَيْهِ عَظِيمَةٍ، وَغِناكَ عَنْهُ قَدِيمٌ، وَهُوَ عِنْدِي كَثِيرٌ، وَهُوَ عَلَيْكَ سَهْلٌ يَسِيرٌ؛ اللّهُمَّ إِنَّ عَفْوَكَ عَنْ ذَنْبِي، وَتَجاوُزَكَ عَنْ خَطِيئَتِي، وَصَفْحَكَ عَنْ ظُلْمِي، وَسَتْرَكَ عَلى قَبِيحِ عَمَلِي، وَحِلْمَكَ عَنْ كَثِيرِ جُرْمِي عِنْدَ ما كانَ مِنْ خَطَئِي وَعَمْدِي أَطْمَعَنِي فِي أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ ما لا أَسْتَوْجِبُهُ مِنْكَ الَّذِي رَزَقْتَنِي مِنْ رَحْمَتِكَ، وَأَرَيْتَنِي مِنْ قُدْرَتِكَ، وَعَرَّفْتَنِي مِنْ إِجابَتِكَ، فَصِرْتُ أَدْعُوكَ آمِناً، وَأَسْأَلُكَ مُسْتَأْنِساً لا خائِفاً وَلا وَجِلاً، مُدِلاًّ عَلَيْكَ فِيما قَصَدْتُ فِيهِ إِلَيْكَ، فَإِنْ أَبْطَأَ عَنِّي عَتَبْتُ بِجَهْلِي عَلَيْكَ، وَلَعَلَّ الَّذِي أَبْطَأَ عَنِّي هُوَ خَيْرٌ لِي لِعِلْمِكَ بِعاقِبَةِ الأُمُورِ، فَلَمْ أَرَ مَوْلىً كَرِيماً أَصْبَرَ عَلى عَبْدٍ لَئِيمٍ مِنْكَ عَلَيَّ، يا رَبِّ، إِنَّكَ تَدْعُونِي فَأُوَلِّي عَنْكَ، وَتَتَحَبَّبُ إِلَيَّ فَأَتَبَغَّضُ إِلَيْكَ، وَتَتَوَدَّدُ إِلَيَّ فَلا أَقْبَلُ مِنْكَ كَأَنَّ لِيَ التَّطَوُّلَ عَلَيْكَ؛ فَلَمْ يَمْنَعْكَ ذلِكَ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ لِي وَالإِحْسانِ إِلَيَّ، وَالتَّفَضُّلِ عَلَيَّ بِجُودِكَ وَكَرَمِكَ، فَارْحَمْ عَبْدَكَ الجاهِلَ وَجُدْ عَلَيْهِ بِفَضْلِ إِحْسانِكَ إِنَّكَ جَوادٌ كَرِيمٌ. الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ مالِكِ المُلْكِ، مُجْرِي الفُلْكِ، مُسَخِّرِ الرِّياحِ، فالِقِ الإِصْباحِ، دَيّانِ الدِّينِ، رَبِّ العالَمِينَ. الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ عَلى حِلْمِهِ بَعْدَ عِلْمِهِ، وَالحَمْدُ لِلّهِ عَلى عَفْوِهِ بَعْدَ قُدْرَتِهِ، وَالحَمْدُ لِلّهِ عَلى طُولِ أَناتِهِ فِي غَضَبِهِ وَهُوَ قادِرٌ عَلى ما يُرِيدُ. الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ خالِقِ الخَلْقِ، باسِطِ الرِّزْقِ، فالِقِ الإِصْباحِ، ذِي الجَلالِ وَالإِكْرامِ وَالفَضْلِ وَالإِنْعامِ، الَّذِي بَعُدَ فَلا يُرى، وَقَرُبَ فَشَهِدَ النَّجْوى، تَبارَكَ وَتَعالى. الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الَّذِي لَيْسَ لَهُ مُنازِعٌ يُعادِلُهُ، وَلا شَبِيهٌ يُشاكِلُهُ، وَلا ظَهِيرٌ يُعاضِدُهُ، قَهَرَ بِعِزَّتِهِ الأَعِزّاءَ، وَتَواضَعَ لِعَظَمَتِهِ العُظَماءُ، فَبَلَغَ بِقُدْرَتِهِ ما يَشاءُ؛ الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الَّذِي يُجِيبُنِي حِينَ أُنادِيهِ، وَيَسْتُرُ عَلَيَّ كُلَّ عَوْرَةٍ وَأَنا أَعْصِيهِ، وَيُعَظِّمُ النِّعْمَةَ عَلَيَّ فَلا أُجازِيهِ، فَكَمْ مِنْ مَوْهِبَةٍ هَنِيئَةٍ قَدْ أَعْطانِي، وَعَظِيمَةٍ مَخُوفَةٍ قَدْ كَفانِي، وَبَهْجَةٍ مُونِقَةٍ قَدْ أَرانِي، فَأُثْنِي عَلَيْهِ حامِداً، وَأَذْكُرُهُ مُسَبِّحاً. الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الَّذِي لا يُهْتَكُ حِجابُهُ، وَلا يُغْلَقُ بابُهُ، وَلا يُرَدُّ سائِلُهُ، وَلا يُخَيَّبُ. الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ الخائِفِينَ، وَيُنَجِّي الصّالِحِينَ، وَيَرْفَعُ المُسْتَضْعَفِينَ، وَيَضَعُ المُسْتَكْبِرِينَ، وَيُهْلِكُ مُلُوكاً وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ آخَرِينَ، وَالحَمْدُ لِلّهِ قاصِمِ الجَبّارِينَ، مُبِيرِ الظّالِمِينَ، مُدْرِكِ الهارِبِينَ، نَكالِ الظّالِمِينَ، صَرِيخِ المُسْتَصْرِخِينَ، مَوْضِعِ حاجاتِ الطّالِبِينَ، مُعْتَمَدِ المُؤْمِنِينَ. الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الَّذِي مِنْ خَشْيَتِهِ تَرْعَدُ السَّماءُ وَسُكّانُها، وَتَرْجُفُ الأَرْضُ وَعُمّارُها، وَتَمُوجُ البِحارُ وَمَنْ يَسْبَحُ فِي غَمَراتِها؛ (الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الَّذِي هَدانا لِهذا وَما كُنّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلا أَنْ هَدانا اللّهُ) الحَمْدُ لِلّهِ الَّذِي يَخْلُقُ وَلَمْ يُخْلَقْ، وَيَرْزُقُ وَلا يُرْزَقُ، وَيُطْعِمُ وَلا يُطْعَمُ، وَيُمِيتُ الأَحْياءَ، وَيُحْيِي المَوْتى، وَهُوَ حَيٌّ لا يَمُوتُ، بِيَدِهِ الخَيْرُ، وَهُوَ عَلى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ. اللّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلى مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِكَ وَرَسُولِكَ وَأَمِينِكَ وَصَفِيِّكَ وَحَبِيبِكَ وَخِيَرَتِكَ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ، وَحافِظِ سِرِّكَ، وَمُبَلِّغِ رِسالاتِكَ أَفْضَلَ وَأَحْسَنَ وَأَجْمَلَ وَأَكْمَلَ وَأَزْكى وَأَنْمى وَأَطْيَبَ وَأَطْهَرَ وَأَسْنى وَأَكْثَرَ ما صَلَّيْتَ وَبارَكْتَ وَتَرَحَّمْتَ وَتَحَنَّنْتَ وَسَلَّمْتَ عَلى أَحَدٍ مِنْ عِبادِكَ وَأَنْبِيائِكَ وَرُسُلِكَ وَصِفْوَتِكَ وَأَهْلِ الكَرامَةِ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ؛ اللّهُمَّ وَصَلِّ عَلى عَلِيٍّ أَمِيرِ المُؤْمِنِينَ، وَوَصِيِّ رَسُولِ رَبِّ العالَمِينَ، عَبْدِكَ وَوَلِيِّكَ وَأَخِي رَسُولِكَ وَحُجَّتِكَ عَلى خَلْقِكَ، وَآيَتِكَ الكُبْرى، وَالنَّبَإِ العَظِيمِ، وَصَلِّ عَلى الصِّدِّيقَةِ الطّاهِرَةِ فاطِمَةَ سَيِّدَةِ نِساءِ العالَمِينَ، وَصَلِّ عَلى سِبْطَيِ الرَّحْمَةِ، وَإِمامَيِ الهُدى الحَسَنِ وَالحُسَيْنِ سَيِّدَيْ شَبابِ أَهْلِ الجَنَّةِ، وَصَلِّ عَلى أَئِمَّةِ المُسْلِمِينَ؛ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الحُسَيْنِ، وَمُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ، وَجَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَمُوسى بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ، وَعَلِيِّ بْنِ مُوسى، وَمُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ، وَعَلِيِّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَالحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ، وَالخَلَفِ الهادِي المَهْدِيِّ، حُجَجِكَ عَلى عِبادِكَ، وَأُمَنائِكَ فِي بِلادِكَ صَلاةً كَثِيرَةً دائِمَةً؛ اللّهُمَّ وَصَلِّ عَلى وَلِيِّ أَمْرِكَ القائِمِ المُؤَمَّلِ، وَالعَدْلِ المُنْتَظَرِ، وَحُفَّهُ بِمَلائِكَتِكَ المُقَرَّبِينَ، وَأَيِّدْهُ بِرُوحِ القُدُسِ يا رَبَّ العالَمِينَ. اللّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ الدّاعِيَ إِلى كِتابِكَ، وَالقائِمَ بِدِينِكَ، اسْتَخْلِفْهُ فِي الأَرْضِ كَما اسْتَخْلَفْتَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ، مَكِّنْ لَهُ دِينَهُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَيْتَهُ لَهُ، أَبْدِلْهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِ أَمْناً، يَعْبُدُكَ لا يُشْرِكُ بِكَ شَيْئاً. اللّهُمَّ أَعِزَّهُ وَأَعْزِزْ بِهِ، وَانْصُرْهُ وَانْتَصِرْ بِهِ، وَانْصُرْهُ نَصْراً عَزِيزاً، وَافْتَحْ لَهُ فَتْحاً يَسِيراً، وَاجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ لَدُنْكَ سُلْطاناً نَصِيراً. اللّهُمَّ أَظْهِرْ بِهِ دِينَكَ وَسُنَّةَ نَبِيِّكَ حَتّى لا يَسْتَخْفِيَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الحَقِّ مَخافَةَ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الخَلْقِ. اللّهُمَّ إِنّا نَرْغَبُ إِلَيْكَ فِي دَوْلَةٍ كَرِيمَةٍ تُعِزُّ بِها الإِسْلامَ وَأَهْلَهُ، وَتُذِلُّ بِها النِّفاقَ وَأَهْلَهُ، وَتَجْعَلُنا فِيها مِنَ الدُّعاةِ إِلى طاعَتِكَ، وَالقادَةِ إِلى سَبِيلِكَ، وَتَرْزُقُنا بِها كَرامَةَ الدُّنْيا وَالآخِرَةِ؛ اللّهُمَّ ما عَرَّفْتَنا مِنَ الحَقِّ فَحَمِّلْناهُ، وَما قَصُرْنا عَنْهُ فَبَلِّغْناهُ. اللّهُمَّ

المم به شعثنا، واشعب به صدعنا، وارتق به فتقنا، وكثر به قلتنا، وأعزز به ذلتنا، وأغن به
عائلنا، واقض به عن مغرمنا، واجبر به فقرنا، وسد به خلتنا، ويسر به عسرنا، وبيض به
وجوهنا، وفك به أسرنا، وأنجح به طلبتنا، وأنجز به مواعيدنا، واستجب به دعوتنا، وأعطنا به
سؤلنا، وبلغنا به من الدنيا والآخرة آمالنا، وأعطنا به فوق رغبتنا، يا خير المسؤولين، وأوسع
المعطين، اشف به صدورنا، وأذهب به غيظ قلوبنا، واهدنا به لما اختلف فيه من الحق بإذنك،
إنك تهدي من تشاء إلى صراط مستقيم، وانصرنا به على عدوك وعدونا إله الحق آمين؛ اللهم
إنا نشكو إليك فقد نبينا صلواتك عليه وآله، وغيبة ولينا، وكثرة عدونا، وقلة عددنا،
وشدة الفتن بنا، وتظاهر الزمان علينا، فصل على محمد وآله، وأعنا على ذلك بفتح منك
تعجله، وبضر تكشفه، ونصر تعزه، وسلطان حق تظهره، ورحمة منك تجللناها، وعافية
منك تلبسناها، برحمتك يا أرحم الراحمين.

In the Name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful

O Allah, I begin the glorification with praise of Thee; Thou, from Thy bounties, gives out freely the truth and salvation; I know for sure that Thou art the most merciful in the disposition of forgiveness and mercy, [but] very exacting at the time of giving exemplary punishment and chastisement to wrongdoers, the Omnipotent in the domain of absolute power and might. O Allah, Thou has permitted me to invoke Thee and beseech Thee, so listen, O Hearer, to my words of praise, give a favorable reply to my supplication, and minimize my falling into misery, O the often-forgiving. O my Allah, Thou hast removed many troubles, dispelled many sorrows, mitigated many miseries, and always spread mercy, cutting short the tightening circles of misfortunes. All praise be to Allah, Who has not taken unto Himself a wife or a son and Who has no partner in sovereignty or any protecting friend through dependence. Magnify Him with all magnificence. All praise be to Allah, with complete gratitude for all his bounties. All praise be to Allah, Who has no opposition to His rule nor any challenge to His commands. All praise be to Allah, Who has no counsel to meddle with His operation of creation, nor is there anything similar to Him in His greatness. All praise be to Allah, Whose commandments operate in Creation; His glory is evident through love and kindness. His distinct overflowing generosity is freely available through His unlimited bestowals, which do not exhaust His resources. He does not swell the numerous benefits except because of generosity and kindness. Verily, He is mighty and generous. O Allah, I ask for some from many; amid my many needs, I entirely depend on them. Since eternity, Thou art able to do without it, but for me, it is a titanic effort, and for Thee, it is effortless and straightforward. O Allah, indeed, when Thou pardon my sins, overlook my mistakes, take a lenient view of my disorderly conduct, cover up my foul actions, show consideration despite my many transgressions committed willfully or negligently, I am tempted to ask for that which I do not deserve, from Thee Who, through Thy mercy, gives me the daily bread provides me with that which is suitable for me, through Thy control; and distinguishes me with a favorable reply to my requests. So I persist in calling out, believing in Thee, and invoking Thee, talking familiarly, not afraid or shy, but assured of Thy love and kindness whenever I turn to Thee. Out of ignorance, it is a temporary setback, and I begin to despair, although slowing down may be a blessing in disguise. Because Thou alone knows [all] the consequences. I know no generous master more accommodating to dissatisfied servants than Thou art to me. O Lord, Thou giveth an invitation, but I turn it down. Thou becometh familiar with me, but I do not care for Thee. Thou loveth me, but I do not correspond to Thee as if Thou are overreaching me. Yet Thou doth not abstain from bestowing favors and blessings on me from Thy mercy and generosity, so have mercy on Thy ignorant servant Verily Thou art generous and kind. Praise be To Allah, the owner of sovereignty, Who sets the course of the skies and the stars, controls the winds, causes the daybreak, and administers authority, the Lord of the worlds. Praise be to Allah for His indulgence in the wake of His all-awareness. Praise be to Allah for His amnesty ensuing from His omnipotence. Praise be To Allah for the respite He allows Despite provocation. He can do what He wills. Praise be to Allah, the creator of all created beings, Who makes sustenance freely available, starts the day, the owner of glory, might, favors, and bounties, Who is far away, invisible, and nearest, so near that He is fully aware of the whispered secrets, the blessed, the Praised. Praise be to Allah, Who has no equal to challenge Him, no image comparable to Him, and no helper to assist Him. He tames the powerful by His force, and disgraced is terrible before His greatness; so, He, through His power, fulfills that which He wills. Praise Allah, Who answers me whenever I call Him; covers up my shortcomings, yet I disobey Him; gives me the most significant part of the bounties, yet I want more. Many favors He has sanctioned; many terrible dangers He has averted; and many

blossoming joys he has made available for me. Therefore, I sing His praises and recite His glorification. Praise be to Allah. None can disclose anything hidden by Him; none can shut the doors kept open by Him; no one who makes a request is sent away disappointed by Him; and no one who looks long and attentively is deluded in his hopes. Praise be to Allah, Who gives protection to the frightened, comes to the help of the upright, promotes the cause of the weak and the enslaved, annihilates the autocrats, destroys rulers, and appoints the 'awaited saviors' in their place. Praise be to Allah, Who breaks everything belonging to the oppressors, puts an end to the tyrants, watches over the fugitives, assists those who cry out for help, meets and clears up the demands of the needy beseechers, and supports the faithful. Praise be to Allah. In his awe-inspiring fear, the heavens and their dwellers tremble and shiver; the earth and its inhabitants shake and quiver; the oceans and all that float and swim in its waters flow together in excitement and tumult. Praise be to Allah, Who has guided us to this. We could not have been led aright if Allah had not guided us. Praise be to Allah, Who creates but is not created; gives subsistence but needs no provisions; gives food to eat but takes no nourishment; makes the living dead and brings the dead to life; and He is the ever-living; there is no death for Him; in His hands is all the good. And He can do all things. O Allah, send blessings on Muhammad, Thy servant, Messenger, confidant, friend, beloved intimate, mercy unto all the created beings, bearer of Thy sacraments, the quotient of Thy messengers, the most superior, the exquisite, the most handsome, the most perfect, the upright, the more prospering, the more pleasant, the thoroughly purified, the sublime; who has more and better blessings, advantages, mercies, affections and salutations than Thou made available to any one of Thy servants, prophets, messengers, friends, and those honored by Thee from among Thy created being. O Allah, send blessings on 'Ali, the Leader of the Faithful, the successor to the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds, Thy servant, Thy beloved representative, brother of Thy Messenger, Thy decisive argument over humanity, Thy most important sign, the great news from Thee. O Allah, send blessings on the truthful, pure Fatima, the chosen leader of the women of the world. O Allah, send blessings on the sons of 'the mercy unto the worlds,' the leaders and guides, the Imams al-Hasan and al-Husayn, the leaders of the dwellers of Paradise. O Allah, send blessings on the Leaders of the Muslims, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, Muhammad ibn 'Ali, Jafar ibn Muhammad, Musa ibn Jafar, 'Ali ibn Musa, Muhammad ibn Ali, 'Ali ibn Muhammad, al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, and his son, the rightly guided Guide, Thy decisive argument over Thy servants, Thy trustworthy confidant on Thy earth, blessings, numerous, and forever. O Allah, send blessings on the Custodian of thy commandments, the vigilant Guardian, the reliable Patron, the awaited Justice, surrounded by Thy favorite angels, assisted by the Holy Spirit. O Lord of the worlds. O Allah, send him to call the people unto Thy Book for establishing Thy religion and make him succeed in the earth, as Thou caused those who were before him to grow, and verify for him his faith which Thou has approved for him, and give him in exchange safety after fear. He serves Thee. He ascribes nothing as partner unto Thee. O Allah, give him power and authority, and through him strengthen the people. Give him the necessary assistance, and through him support the people, make him prevail over all final decisive victories, and delegate him Thy controlling authority. O Allah, give currency to Thy religion and the way of life of Thy Prophet, through him till nothing which is just and genuine is kept concealed from any human being. O Allah, we ardently desire that in [his] kind, just, and fair era, Thou should reactivate Islam and stimulate its followers, and humble and humiliate the imposters and their double-dealing, and include us among those who invite people unto Thy obedience, and lead them to Thy approved path, and give us the good of this world and the world to come. O Allah, let us bear out and hold up that which Thou maketh known to us as the truth and be fully aware of what we fall short of doing. O Allah, through him, set in order our disorder; gather and unite our flock; stitch together our sundered separation; turn our want and poverty into sufficiency; lift us from our degradation; free us from our misery; pull us out from our debts; help us to get out from the ditch of cares and sorrows; fill the gap created by confusion among us; let our difficulties be easy to deal with; refine our substance and style; untie our ropes and straps; let our efforts succeed well and secure success; make us fulfill our promises; give answers to our prayers; listen to our requests; cause us to obtain the good of this world and the hereafter; give us much and more than our expectations, O the best of givers and bestowers; and cleanse our hearts, unburden our emotions from hate and anger, and, in the event of dispute in the matter of truth, show us the right path. Verily, Thou guides whoever Thou will to the right path. Let us, through him, get the better of Thy enemies and our opponents, O True God. Be it so. O Allah, we feel uneasy about and are disturbed by the departure of our Prophet;

thy blessings be on him and his family, the absence of our guardian-friend, too many enemies, our numerical scarcity, widespread disorder, and the vicissitudes of time. So, send blessings to Muhammad and his family, and help us overcome this state of affairs immediately. Disperse the ominous clouds hanging over our heads; lend a helping hand to achieve success; bring in the rule of justice and fair play; make us bright, free from grief; and take care of us. Through Thy mercy, O most Merciful.

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[1]During the time of my late father - may Allah be pleased with him - communication between him and his students was usually done through letters and writing treatises, and in these letters, they expressed more love and devotion to their children by saying: send my regards to your honorable sons. But there was a person among them who mentioned all the names of their children one by one and greeted them. One day, the late father said to me: So-and-so, who greets every child by mentioning their name, has understood the secret of conduct!

[2]A Ḥusaynīyah (Arabic: حسينية) is a congregation hall for Twelver Shia Muslim commemoration ceremonies, especially those associated with the Mourning of Muharram. Ḥusaynīyah is a multitude of halls for the mourning of Muharram and other commemoration rituals of Shia. Its name comes from Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of Muhammad (translator)

[3] It should be mentioned that the translation of the other parts of the prayer was taken from the writings of the late 'Allāmah Ṭihrānī, may Allah be pleased with him, and was completed by the respected commentator. These translations have been placed in the middle of the sessions according to the prayer verses. (research fellow)

[4] al-Iqbāl bil-A'māl al-Ḥasanah, Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs, vol. 1, p. 138: Al-Iftitāḥ Supplication was narrated by Muḥammad b. Abiqara with his connected document from Sakuni. Sakuni said: I asked Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān to recite the prayers that his uncle Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd al-'Amrī, who is one of the specially dedicated deputies of Ḥaḍrat Baqīyatallāh used to recite in the month of Ramadan, to bring it to me; He brought a notebook with a red cover and this supplication was also the supplication of that notebook.

al-Iqbāl bil-A'māl al-Ḥasanah, vol. 1, p. 157: Abu Hamza Thumali narrated that Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him) used to pray all night during the month of Ramadan, and when it was dawn, he would recite this prayer.

[5] Al-Kāfī, vol. 2, p. 107, Chapter Al-'Afw.

[6] Matl' al-Anwār, vol. 4, pp. 161-167; And also, for more information about this topic, refer to Sālik Āgāh.

[7] Kashf al-Ghummah fī Ma'rifah al-A'immah, vol. 2, p. 81, with some differences.

[8] Quran, 16:90. Nūr Malakūt Quran. n, vol. 1, p. 149: "Indeed, God commands you to be just and benevolent, to take care of and give to your relatives.

[9] Tafsīr al-Qummī, vol. 2, p. 228:

فقال: لو وضعوا الشمس فی یمینی و القمر فی یساری، ما أردته؛ و لکن یعطونی کلمة یملکون بها العرب و تدین لهم بها العجم و یکونون ملوکا فی الجنة.

فقال لهم أبوطالب ذلک، فقالوا: نعم، و عشر کلمات! فقال لهم رسول الله صلى الله علیه و آله و سلم: "تشهدون أن لا إله إلا الله و أنی رسول الله.

[10] Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 33, p. 229; Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah, Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, vol. 6, p. 282; Imām Shināsī, vol. 4, p. 144.

For more information about the sufferings of the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, refer to Imām Shināsī, vol. 1, p. 118; Nūr Malakūt Qur'ān, vol. 4, p. 338.

[11] Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī, vol. 1, p. 100:

عن أبی‌بصیر، عن أبی‌عبدالله، قال: إن العبد المؤمن حین یخرج من بیته حاجا، لا یخطو خطوة و لا یخطو به راحلته إلا کتب الله له بها حسنة و محا عنه سیئة و رفع له بها درجة، فإذا وقف بعرفات فلو کانت له ذنوب عدد الثرى، رجع کما ولدته أمه، فقال له: استأنف العمل!

یقول الله: فَمَن تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَن تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنِ اتَّقَى *

*Quran, 2:203.

[12] Tafsīr al-Qumī, vol. 2, p. 204:

عن ابی‌عبدالله علیه السّلام، قال: إنّ الربّ تبارک و تعالیٰ یَنزِل أمرُه کلَّ لیلةِ جُمُعةٍ إلی السّماء الدّنیا من أوّل اللّیل، و فی کلّ لیلةٍ فی الثّلُث الأخیر و أمامَه مَلکٌ یُنادی: "هل مِن تائبٍ یُتابُ علیه؟ هل من مستغفرٍ فیُغفَرَ له؟ هل من سائلٍ فیُعطیٰ مَسْئَلَتَه؟ اللهمّ أعْطِ لکلِّ مُنفقٍ خَلَفًا و لکلِّ مُمسِکٍ تَلَفًا!" إلیٰ أن یَطلَعَ الفجرُ، فإذا طلع الفجرُ عاد أمرُ الربِّ إلیٰ عرشِه، فیُقَسِّمُ الأرزاقُ بَین العباد.

[13] Gulistān, chapter 8, p. 234:
In verdant fields, where wildflowers bloom, A tiger stalks, its hunger's boom.
With fangs so sharp and eyes so keen, It seeks the meek, the sheep so keen.
Pity the tiger, some may say, For its hunger, its relentless sway.
Yet pity's touch, a fleeting grace, May leave the sheep in dire embrace.

[14] For more information about the explanation and the beautiful interpretation of Ḥaḍrat 'Allāmah Ṭihrānī - may Allah be pleased with him - about the attributes of beauty and glory of Ḥaḍrat Ḥaqq, refer to Tafsīr Aye Nūr, p. 249.

[15] Al-Kāfi, vol. 2, p. 72:
عن أبی‌الحسن الرّضا علیه السّلام قال: "أحسِنِ الظّنَّ بالله، فإنّ اللهَ عزّوجلّ یقولُ: أنا عندَ ظنِّ عَبدیَ المؤمنِ بی، إن خیرًا فخَیرًا و إن شرًّا فشَرًّا.

[16] Quran, 47:12. Imām Shināsī Imām Shināsī, vol. 9, p. 274:
In ultimate heavens where the trees are so abundant that they are touching each other and under these trees, rivers flow.

[17] Mashāriq Anwār al-yaqīn fi Asrār Amīr Al-Mu'minīn (peace be upon him), p. 283; Al-Jawāhir al-sanīyya fī l-aḥādīth al-qudsīyya, p. 710:
و أنّه قد جاء فی الأحادیث القدسیّة: أنّ الله جلّ جلاله یقول: "عبدی! خلَقتُ الأشیاءَ لأجلِک و خلقتُکَ لأجلی، وهَبتُکَ الدّنیا بالإحسان و الأخرةَ بالإیمان.

[18] Mathnawī Ma'nawī, book one:

ور مثالی خواهی از علم نهان
قصّه گو از رومیان و چینیان
چینیان گفتند: ما نقّاش‌تر
رومیان گفتند: ما را کرّ و فرّ
گفت سلطان: امتحان خواهم در این
کز شماها کیست در دعوا گزین؟
اهل چین و روم چون حاضر شدند
رومیان از بحث در مکث آمدند
چینیان گفتند یک خانه به ما
خاصه بسپارید و یک آن شما
بود دو خانه مقابل، دربه‌در
زان یکی چینی ستد، رومی دگر
چینیان صد رنگ از شه خواستند
پس خزینه باز کرد آن ارجمند
هر صباحی از خزینه رنگ‌ها
چینیان را راتبه بود از عطا
رومیان گفتند : نّی لون و نه رنگ
در خور آید کار را ، جز دفع زنگ
در فرو بستند و صیقل می‌زدند
همچو گردون ساده و صافی شدند
از دو صد رنگی به بی‌رنگی رهی است
رنگ چون ابر است و بی‌رنگی مهی است
هرچه اندر ابر ضو بینی و تاب
آن ز اختر دان و ماه و آفتاب
چینیان چون از عمل فارغ شدند
از پی شادی دهل‌ها می‌زدند
شه در آمد دید آنجا نقش‌ها
می‌ربود آن عقل را و فهم را
بعد از آن آمد به سوی رومیان
پرده را بالا کشیدند از میان
عکس آن تصویر و آن کردار ها
زد برین صافی‌شده دیوار ها

[illegible]

[19] For more information, refer to Nūr Malakūt Qur'an, Vol. 1, pp. 141-147, the story of a wanderer who discovered the veil of Malakūt as a result of serving his mother.

[20] Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl, p. 217; Al-Jawāhir al-sanīyya fī l-aḥādith al-qudsiyya, p. 161, with some difference:

من تواضع لغنيّ طلباً لما عنده، ذهب ثلثا دينه. و من تواضع لغنيّ لأجل غناه، ذهب ثلثا دينه.

[21] Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol. 2, p. 85; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, vol. 5, p. 195; Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, vol. 19, p. 127.

[22] Manāqib al-Abi Ṭālib (peace be upon them), vol. 3, p. 136:

[23] al-'Amālī, Shaykh Mufīd, p. 135; Al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqah, p. 115; 'Ilām al-wará bi-a'lām al-hudá, vol. 1, p. 372.

[24] Da'āim al-Islām, vol. 1, p. 388:

أنّه كان يقسّم مالاً بين المسلمين، إذ وقف عليه رجلٌ غائرُ العينين مشرفُ الحاجبين، فقال: "ما عدلت فيما قسّمت!" ثمّ ولّى فتغيّر وجهُ رسول الله و قال: "فإذا أنا لم أعدل فمن يعدل؟ ولكن قد أوذي موسى من قبلي فصبر...

[25] Quran, 9:60:

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۖ فَرِيضَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ.

Imām Shināsī, vol. 11, p. 252, commentary: The use of alms for the poor and the helpless, and those in charge of collecting and spending alms, and to incline enemies and unbelievers to Islam, and to free slaves, and for debtors, and what is in the way of God, and for those who are stuck during their travels. This ruling is obligatory from God, and God is All-Knowing, and His works are based on perfection, strength, and supreme benefits.

[26] 'Ilām al-wará bi-a'lām al-hudá, vol. 1, p. 176.

[27] Ibid., p. 242.

[28] Quran, 9:60.

[29] Quran, 61:90. Nūr Malakūt Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 149: Indeed, God commands you to be just and benevolent.

[30] Manāqib al-Abi Ṭālib (peace be upon them), vol. 3, p. 61:

مسند أبي‌يعلى: عبدالرّحمن بن أبي‌سعيد الخدري، عن أبيه قال: مرّ عليّ بن أبي‌طالب، فقال النبيّ صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم: "الحقّ مع ذا، الحقّ مع ذا"!

و سُئل أبوذر عن اختلاف الناس عنه، فقال: "عليک بكتاب الله و الشّيخ عليّ بن أبي‌طالب، فإنّي سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله و سلّم يقول: عليٌّ مع الحقّ و الحقّ معه و عليٌّ لسانُه، و الحقّ يدور حيثُ ما دار عليّ".

Imam Ali bin Abi Talib passed by one day, and the Prophet said: The right belongs exclusively to this person.

Abu Dharr was asked about the people's differences regarding Amir al-Mu'minin, and he replied: May God's book and Shaykh Ali bin Abi Talib be upon your endeavors . I heard the Prophet say: Be aware that the truth is with Ali, and Ali is with the truth. Truth continually revolves around Ali and goes around wherever Ali goes.

[31] Nahj al-Balāghah, vol. 4, pp. 178 and 238:

قال عليه السّلام: "النّاسُ أعداءُ ما جهلوا.

Imam Ali (peace be upon him): People are enemies of what they are ignorant.

[32] Thawāb al-A'māl wa 'iqāb al-A'māl. p. 23.

[33] Quran, 5:3.

وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ.

Imām Shināsī, vol. 8, p. 61: And that animal that is killed on the temple stone to get closer to the Gods.

Quran, 6:137:

وَكَذَٰلِكَ زَيَّنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتْلَ أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَاؤُهُمْ لِيُرْدُوهُمْ وَلِيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ ۖ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ.

[34] Sizdah Bedar (Persian: سیزده‌بدر— sīzdah bedar), (lit. 'Thirteen outdoor') is an Iranian festival held annually on the thirteenth day of Farvardin, the first month of the Iranian

calendar. According to some Iranians' belief, the number thirteen is ominous. Sizdah Bedar, therefore, means "getting rid of the ominous of the day thirteen".

[35]Quran, 13:11. Nūr Malakūt Qur'an, vol. 3, p. 153: God does not change the blessing on people until they change their situations.

[36]«قَسيمُ الجَنّةِ و النّار», al-'Amālī, Shaykh Ṣadūq, p. 89.

For more information, refer to Imām Shināsī; Vol. 1, p. 148.

[37]يَقصَعُكم بالسَّيف!

al-A'mālī, Shaykh Ṭūsī, p. 579, with some difference:

عن أبي‌ذر، قال: قال رسولُ الله صلّى الله عليه و آله، و قد قَدِمَ عليه وَفدُ أهلِ الطائف: "يا أهلَ الطائف! والله لَتُقيمُنَّ الصّلاةَ و لَتُؤتُنَّ الزّكاةَ، أو لأَبعَثَنَّ إليكم رَجلاً كَنفسي، يُحبُّ اللهَ و رسولَه و يُحبُّه اللهُ و رسولُه، يَقصَعُكم بالسّيف"!

فتطاولَ لها أصحابُ رسولِ الله صلّى الله عليه و آله، فأخذ بيَدِ عليٍّ عليه السّلام فأشالها، ثمّ قال: "هو هذا!" فقال أبوبكر و عمر: ما رأينا كاليوم في الفضلِ قطّ.

Imām Shināsī, vol. 13, p. 345:

"Abu Dharr Ghafari narrated that he said: The Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, said to the people of Taif when they arrived at that time: O people of Ṭā'if! I swear to God that you should pray and give zakat. Otherwise, I will raise against you a man who is like me, and loves God and His Messenger, and God and His Messenger also love him, and he will crush you with his sword! Then, the companions of the Messenger of God eagerly looked on, hoping that the Messenger of God would appoint one of them. However, His Holiness took Ali's hand and raised it, then said: This is the man! Abu Bakr and Umar said: We have never seen a day like that day in virtue and greatness of Ali!

[38] Manāqib al-Abi Ṭālib (peace be upon them), vol. 2, p. 115:

[39]For more information about the combination of opposite traits in the existence of Amir al-Mu'minin, peace be upon him, refer to Imām Shināsī, vol. 2, pp. 38-43.

[40] al-Durr al-Manthūr, vol. 3, p. 78.

[41] For more information about the personality of Mr. 'Urwa bin Mas'ūd al-Thaqafī, refer to Imām Shināsī, vol. 15, p. 319; Tafsīr al-Qummī, vol. 2, p. 310.

[42] al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol. 2, p. 37.

[43] Quran, 43:31.

[44] Tafsīr al-Qummī, vol. 2, p. 283; Majma' al-Bayān, vol. 7, p. 410; al-Mīzān, vol. 18, p. 106.

[45] Quran, 74:23-30. Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 5, p. 304: And then he once complained about the meanings and truths of the Qur'an and turned his back on its facts and showed his arrogance and self-righteousness and said: This Qur'an is nothing but a specific, certain and chosen magic. This Qur'an is nothing but human speech. I will set him on fire with Saqr. O our Messenger, do you know what Saqr is? This fire is described as something that engulfs and consumes everything in its path, not sparing anything or anyone. It also leaves nothing behind and turns the skin of the body black and burned. Moreover, this violent fire is under the charge and protection of nineteen angels of torment or punishment.

[46] Quran, 68:16. Nūr Malakūt Qur'an, vol. 4, p. 330: We will soon put heat on his nose (the effect of which is known forever).

[7] For more information about Waleed bin Mughirah and his denial of the Messenger of God despite the existence of conclusive proofs, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 5, p. 300.

[48] Kitāb al-Maghāzī, vol. 3, p. 960, Tārīkh Ibn Khaldun, vol. 2, p. 465.

[49] Ibid, p. 924.

[50] Tārīkh Ibn Khaldun, vol. 2, p. 465.

[51] Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 96.

[52] Kitāb al-Maghāzī, vol. 3, p. 960.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Quran, 36:14-18.
[56] Quran, 36:20-21.
[57] Quran, 36:26-27.
[58] For more information about the quality of proving the existence of purgatory, heaven, and purgatory hell, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 2, p. 210; Vol. 10, p. 87; Mihr Tābān, p. 357.
[59] al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol. 1, p. 237; Imtā' al-asmā' bi-mā li-l-nabī min al-aḥwāl wa-l-amwāl wa-l-ḥafadah wa-l-matā', vol. 14, p. 28.
[60] Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn, p. 86.
[61] Sharḥ al-akhbār, vol. 3, p. 152; Sir Al-Silsila Al-Alawīyah, p. 30.
[62] Kitāb al-Maghāzī, vol. 3, p. 886; Tārīkh Ibn Khaldun, vol. 2, p. 462.
[63] al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol. 1, p. 237
[64] Kitāb al-Maghāzī, vol. 3, p. 962; Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, vol. 3, p. 97.
[65] It is a famous phrase in the language of scholars. Allāh Shināsī, vol. 1, p. 88: What relevance does the soil have to the Lord, the Nurturer of all creatures?
[66] al-A'mālī, Shaykh Ṣadūq, p. 451.
[67] al-A'mālī, Shaykh Ṭūsī, p. 649:
عن أبي‌الحسن الرّضا عليه السّلام، قالَ: "... إنّ اللهَ تعالىٰ إنّما فرَضَ علَى النّاسِ في اليوم و اللّيلةِ سبعَ عشْرةَ ركعةً، من أتىٰ بها لم يسأله اللهُ عزّ وجلّ عمّا سواها، وَ إنّما أضافَ رسولُ اللهِ صلّى اللهُ عليه و آله و سلّم إليها مِثْلَيها، ليتمّ بالنّوافلِ ما يقعُ فيها من النّقصانِ.
[68] Quran, 2:183. Anwār-i Malakūt, vol. 1, p. 27: It became obligatory for you to fast!
[69] Quran, 2:180.
[70] Man lā yaḥduruh al-Faqīh, vol. 1, p. 568.
[71] Quran, 2:286. Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 3, p. 59: O our Lord! Do not blame us if we forget something or make a mistake! O our Lord! Do not impose on us hard tasks, like those hard tasks you placed upon the nations of past prophets. O our Lord! Do not impose on us the tasks that we cannot bear!
[72] For more information on the issue of the necessity of power in the fulfillment of divine tasks, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 3, p. 57.
[73] Quran, 2:54.
[74] For more information on the contents of the hadith "La Haraj", refer to Imām Shināsī, vol. 6, p. 221.
[75] Fqih al-Riḍā, peace be upon him, p. 71; Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 79, p. 349:
قال عليه السّلام: "إعلَم أنّ لكلّ صلاةٍ وقتَين: أوّلٌ و آخرٌ؛ فأوّلُ الوقتِ رضوانُ الله و آخرُه عفوُ الله.
و نَروى أنّ لكلّ صلاةٍ ثلاثةَ أوقاتٍ: أوّلٌ و أوسطٌ و آخرٌ؛ فأوّلُ الوقتِ رضوانُ الله و أوسطُه عفوُ الله و آخرُه غفرانُ الله، و أوّلُ الوقت أفضلُه. و ليس لأحدٍ أن يتّخذ آخرَ الوقت وقتًا، و إنّما جُعِلَ آخرُ الوقت للمريضِ و المُعتلّ و المسافرِ.
[76] Quran, 7:180.
[77] Mihr Tābān, p. 77.
[78] Makārim al-akhlāq, p. 472; Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 79, p. 308.
[79] Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, vol. 8, p. 419, chapter 69.
[80] Ibid., p. 420:
عن أبي‌عبدالله عليه السّلام قال: "و كان مُعاذٌ يؤُمّ في مسجدٍ علىٰ عَهد رسولِ اللهِ صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم، و يُطيلُ القراءةَ؛ و إنّهُ مرّ به رجلٌ فافتتحَ سورةً طويلةً فقرأ الرّجلُ لنفسِه و صلّى، ثمّ ركِبَ راحلتَه فبلَغَ ذلك رسول الله صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم، فبعثَ إلىٰ مُعاذٍ فقال :يا مُعاذُ، إيّاكَ أن تكونَ فتّانًا! عليكَ بـ (والشّمسِ وضُحاها) و ذَواتِها .و قال: "و إنّ النبيّ صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم كانَ ذاتَ يومٍ يؤُمّ أصحابَه فيَسمَعُ بُكاءَ الصّبيّ، فيُخفّفُ الصّلاةَ.
[81] 'Awālī al-la'āli, vol. 3, p. 85:
قال رسول الله: "إنّما [الصّلاةُ] هي التّكبيرُ و التّسبيحُ و قراءةُ القرآن.
[82] Al-Mughnī, vol. 1, p. 802:

قال الفضل بن زياد: سألت أباعبدالله عليه السّلام فقلت: أختم القرآن أجعله فى الوتر او فى التراويح؟ قال: "اجعله فى التراويح.

83 For more information, refer to Anwār Malakūt, vol. 2, p. 180.
84 Al-Kashshāf, vol. 1, p. 1; Tafsīr Bayān al-sa'ādah, vol. 1, p. 23.
85 Quran, 17:78.
86 Al-Kāfi, vol. 3, p. 282:
عن إسحاقَ بنِ عمّارٍ قالَ: قُلتُ لأبىعَبدِالله عليه السّلام: أخبرنى بأفضلِ المواقيتِ فى صلاةِ الفجرِ. فقال: "مع طلوعِ الفجرِ! إنّ اللهَ عزّوجلّ يقولُ: (وَقُرءانَ ٱلفَجرِ إنّ قُرءانَ ٱلفَجرِ كانَ مَشهُودًا)؛ يعنى صلاةَ الفجرِ. تَشهَدُهُ مَلائكَةُ اللّيلِ و مَلائكَةُ النّهارِ؛ فَإذا صلّى العَبدُ الصّبحَ مع طُلوعِ الفجرِ أثبتَت له مَرّتَينِ، أثبتَتها ملائكةُ اللّيلِ و ملائكةُ النّهارِ.

87 Man lā yahḍuruh al-Faqīh, vol. 1, p. 310.

88 Quran, 29:49.
89 Kitāb Sulaym ibn Qays, vol. 2, p. 802:
قالَ أبانُ عَن سُلَيمٍ، قالَ: جَلَستُ إلىٰ عَلِيٍّ عليه السّلام بِالكوفَةِ فى المَسجِدِ و النّاسُ حَولَهُ، فَقالَ عليه السّلام: "سَلونى قَبلَ أن تَفقِدونى! سَلونى عَن كِتابِ اللهِ! فَوَاللهِ ما نَزَلَت آيَةٌ مِن كِتابِ اللهِ إلاّ و قَد أقرَأنيها رَسولُ اللهِ صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم و عَلَّمَنى تَأويلَها.

فَقالَ ابنُ الكَوّاءِ: فَما كانَ يَنزِلُ عَلَيهِ و أنتَ غائِبٌ؟
فَقالَ عليه السّلام: "بَلىٰ، يَحفَظُ عَلَيَّ مَا غِبتُ عَنهُ، فَإذا قَدِمتُ عَلَيهِ قالَ صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم لى: [يا عَلِيُّ] أنزَلَ اللهُ بَعدَكَ كَذا و كَذا فَيُقرِئُنيهِ، و تَأويلُهُ كَذا و كَذا فَيُعَلِّمُنيه.

90 Al-Sunan al-Kubrā, vol. 5, p. 9; Tafsīr al-Ṣāfi, vol. 1, p. 54; Tafsīr al-Mīzān, vol. 12, p. 120.
91 Tārikh al-Islām, vol. 3, p. 267:
قال ابنعمر: تعلّم عمر البقرة فى اثنتىعشرة سنة، فلمّا تعلّمها نحر جزوراً.
92 Al-Kāfi, vol. 2, p. 622:
عن أبىعبدِاللهِ عليه السّلام قالَ: "من مَضىٰ به يومٌ واحِدٌ فَصَلّىٰ فيهِ بِخَمسِ صَلَواتٍ و لَم يَقرَأ فيها بِـ (قُل هُوَ اللّهُ أحَدٌ)، قيلَ لَه: يا عَبدَ اللهِ لَستَ مِنَ المُصَلّين.
93 For more information about this matter, refer to Nūr Malakūt Qur'an, vol. 3, pp. 245-331.

94 Man lā yahḍuruh al-Faqīh, vol. 1, p. 29.

95 Maqtal al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), Abu Mikhnaf, p. 179.

96 al-Maḥāsin, vol. 2, p. 410.

97 Sharia (*sharī'ah)* is a body of religious law that forms a part of the Islamic tradition based on the scriptures of Islam, particularly the Quran and the Hadith.

98 Man lā yahḍuruh al-Faqīh, vol. 1, p. 240.

99 It should be mentioned that this honorable will along with translation and explanations by Ḥaḍrat Āyatullāh Ḥāj Sayyid Muḥammad Muḥsin Ḥusaynī Ṭihrānī, has been published under the title Ḥayāt Jāwīd. (research fellow)

100 Nahj al-Balāghah (`Abduh), vol. 3, p. 51.
101 Dry measure roughly equal to 300 kilogrammes.

102 Al-Kāfi, vol. 4, p. 22; Al-Wāfi, vol. 10, p. 420; Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, vol. 9, p. 454; Wilāyat Faqīh Dar Ḥukūmat Islām, vol. 4, p. 217:

Ḥaḍrat Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) said:
إنّ أميرَ المُؤمنين عليه السّلامُ بعثَ إلى رَجُلٍ بِخَمسَةِ أوساقٍ مِن تَمرِ البُغَيبِغَة [و فى نُسخَةٍ أُخرىٰ: البُقَيعَة.]
و كان الرّجُلُ مِمّن يُرجىٰ نوافلُه و يُؤمّلُ نائلُه و رِفدُه؛ و كانَ لا يَسألُ عَلِيّاً عليه السّلامُ و لا غيرَهُ شيئاً.
Amir al-Mu'minin, peace be upon him, sent to a man five wasaqs of Boghibagh dates or of Baqi'ah dates (five wasaqs means five camel loads). The phrase 'بُغَيبِغَه' is an Arabic term referring to a type of high-quality dried dates. It mentions that the dates were not fresh (رطب), but dried (بُغَيبِغَه or بُقَيعَه), which are considered premium quality. So, the term 'بُغَيبِغَه' is used here to denote a type of luxury or high-quality This man was also a

justified and dignified man who, according to his appearance, people hoped for his grace and forgiveness. There was no possibility of hardship in him, and he was a wealthy person. People had hope in his benevolence and forgiveness. He did not make any demands either from Ali or from anyone other than Ali.

فقال رَجُلٌ لأميرِ المُؤمنينَ عليه السّلامُ: واللهِ ما سألَكَ فلانٌ! و كانَ يُجزيهِ مِنَ الخَمسةِ أوساقٍ وَسقٌ واحدٌ!

A man told Amir al-Mu'minin, peace be upon him: I swear to God, this person did not ask you for anything! Now that you will give him dates, why did you give him five wasaq?! One wasaq was enough for him.

فقال له أميرُ المُؤمنينَ عليه السّلامُ: لا كَثَّرَ اللهُ فِى المُؤمنينَ ضَربَكَ! أُعطِى أنا و تَبخَلُ أنتَ؟!

Amir al-Mu'minin, peace be upon him, said to him: May God not increase the likes of you among the believers! I forgive, and you are stingy?!

لِلّهِ أنتَ! إذا أنا لم أُعطِ الّذِى يَرجونِى إلاّ مِن بَعدِ المَسألَةِ، ثُمّ أعطَيتُهُ بَعدَ المَسألَةِ، فلَم أُعطِهِ إلاّ ثَمَنَ ما أخَذتُ مِنهُ؛ و ذلِكَ لأنّى عَرّضتُهُ أن يَبذُلَ لى وَجهَهُ الّذى يَعفِرُهُ فِى التّرابِ لِرَبّى و رَبِّهِ عِندَ تَعَبُّدِهِ لَه.

If I do not forgive the one who hopes to give until necessity forces him to ask me, I did not give him except the price of what I took from him! Because I have brought him under questioning so that he may humbly offer his countenance, which should only be in the state of worship before our Lord, to me during the request for questioning.

[103] Quran, 39:53. Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 9, p. 127: Say: O my servants, who have wasted your lives and indulged in futility and transgression of divine limits, do not despair of God's mercy! Because God forgives all sins.

[104] Quran, 40:60.

[105] Quran, 19:93-94; Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 4, p. 289: None of the souls in Heaven and Earth has any recourse except to enter into servitude to the merciful Lord. God knows the exact number of them and has made an accurate count.

[106] Quran, 40:60.

[107] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. 4, p. 201, with some differences.

[108] Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib, vol. 3, p. 312.

[109] Kanz al-Fawā'id, p. 233

[110] This phrase was not found in Bukhārī's accessible Ṣaḥīḥ version; However, it is mentioned in the following books: Shu'ab al-Īmān, Bayhaqī, vol. 1, p. 485; Kanz al-'Ummāl fi sunan al-aqwāl wa'l af'āl, vol. 12, p. 619; Ḥilyat al-Awliyā', vol. 1, p. 27; Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah, vol. 6, p. 5, with some differences.

[111] This phrase was not found in Bukhari's accessible Ṣaḥīḥ version; However, it is mentioned in the following books: Al-Musnaf, Ibn Abi Shaiba, vol. 8, p. 144; Shu'ab al-Īmān, Bayhaqī, vol. 1, p. 485; Kanz al-'Ummāl fi Sunan al-Aqwāl wa al-Af'āl., vol. 12, pp. 528 and 529.

[112] For examples, refer to al-Ikhtiṣāṣ, p. 163; Al-Iḥtijāj, vol. 1, p. 168; al-'Amālī, Shaykh Mufid, p. 212; al- faḍā'il, p. 3; Al-Manāqib, 'Alawī, p. 67.

[113] Al-Khiṣāl, vol. 2, p. 420; Rawḍat al-Wā'iẓīn wa baṣīrat al-mutta'iẓīn, vol. 1, p. 109.

[114] Ghurar al-Akhbār, p. 292; Nahj al-Balāghah (`Abduh), vol. 4, p. 152; Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib, vol. 2, p. 102, with some differences.

[115] Rawḍat al-wā'iẓīn wa baṣīrat al-mutta'iẓīne, vol. 1, p. 94; al-Iḥtijāj, vol. 1, p. 61.

[116] Quran, 45:23. Imām Shināsī, vol. 2, p. 124: Have you seen someone who made his desire his God, and God has led him astray despite knowledge?

[117] Jāmi' Al-Akhbār, Shu'ayrī, p. 129, paragraph 1; Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 22, p. 453. Translated: Their Gods are their bellies, their Qiblah is their wives, and their honor depends on having dirhams and dinars. (research fellow)
For more information, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī; Vol. 2, p. 251.

[118] Al-Iqbāl bi-l-a'māl al-ḥasanat fi mā yu'mal marrah fi l-sanah, vol. 1, p. 138, verses of Iftitāḥ supplication.

[119] For more information about the meaning of creation and manifestation, refer to Allāh Shināsī, vol. 2, pp. 234-181, topics 19 and 20; Imām Shināsī, vol. 5, pp. 74-81.

[120] For more information, refer to Allāh Shināsī; Vol. 2, p. 271.

[121] Quran, 57:4. For more information about the interpretation of this verse and the meaning of the existence of truth with creatures, refer to Anwār-i Malakūt, vol. 2, p. 216.

[122] Quran, 58:7.

[123] For more information, refer to Allāh Shināsī; Vol. 2, p. 227.

[124] Sharḥ-i Fuṣuṣ al-Ḥikam, Qaysarī, p. 27, quoted by Amir al-Mu'minin, peace be upon him; Sharh Mathnawī, vol. 3, Sabziwārī, p. 455 and p. 509, Amir al-Mu'minin narrated this theme, peace be upon him; al-Tawḥīd, p. 306; al-'Amālī, Shaykh Ṣadūq, pp. 342 and 343:

هو فى الأشياء على غير ممازجة، خارج منها على غير مباينة..
داخل فى الأشياء لا كشىء فى شىء داخل، و خارج منها لا كشىء من شىء خارج..

Nahj al-Balāghah (`Abduh), vol. 1, p. 16:

مع كل شىء لا بمقارنة، و غير كل شىء لا بمزايلة.

[125] For more information, refer to Tawḥīd-i 'ilmī wa'aynī, p. 210.

[126] Quran, 25:45. Allāh Shināsī, vol. 3, p. 44:
"Have you not seen and considered your Lord, how He spread the shadow?!

[127] Būstān of Sa'dī, p. 113.

[128] Quran, 25:45. Allāh Shināsī, vol. 3, p. 44.

[129] For more information about the Divine Breath, refer to Allāh Shināsī, vol. 3, p. 199.

[130] Quran, 67:20.

[131] Majma' al-Bayān, vol. 10, p. 860.

[132] Al-Iqbāl bi-l-a'māl al-ḥasanat fi mā yu'mal marrah fi l-sanah, vol. 1, p. 138, verses of Iftitāḥ supplication.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Al-Iqbāl bi-l-a'māl al-ḥasanat fi mā yu'mal marrah fi l-sanah, vol. 1, p. 140, verses of the Iftitāḥ supplication.

[135] Al-Kāfi, vol. 1, p. 37:

عن أبى‌عبدالله عليه السلام، قال: كان أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام يقول: "يا طالب العلم! إن للعالم ثلاث علامات: العلم و الحلم و الصمت؛ و للمتكلف ثلاث علامات: ينازع من فوقه بالمعصية، و يظلم من دونه بالغلبة، و يظاهر الظلمة.

Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: Ḥaḍrat Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) used to say: There are three signs for a scholar: knowledge, tolerance, and silence and there are three signs for someone who shows himself to be a scholar: He fights with someone superior to him by defying him, he oppresses him by defeating someone inferior to him, and he helps the oppressors. (research fellow)

[136] Nahj al-Balāghah (`Abduh), vol. 2, p. 163.

[137] al-Maḥāsin, vol. 1, p. 215.

[138] Quran, 3:133.

[139] A proverbial Arabic phrase stating that it is usually spoken about someone who is primarily perfect and correct in their words and actions. However, occasionally, this person may make a mistake or blunder.

[140] Man lā yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh, vol. 3, p. 13:

روى عن على عليه السلام، قال: "انه قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله و سلم:
إذا تقاضى إليك رجلان، فلا تقض للأول حتى تسمع من الآخر! فإنك إذا فعلت ذلك تبين لك القضاء.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said: When two people ask you, never judge in favor of the first person until you hear the other's words as well!

Because when you do this and hear another word, the correct judgment will be revealed to you. (research fellow)

[141] Nishān az Bīnishānhā, Karāmāt section, story 81, with some differences.

[142] Quran, 54:42.

[143] Quran, 16:61.

[144] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 140, verses from the noble Iftitāḥ supplication.

[145] Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī asrār Amīr al-Mu'minīn, p. 64.

[146] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 140, verses from the noble Iftitāḥ supplication.

[147] Quran, 55:78.

[148] Quran, 50:35. Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 4, p. 217: And there will also be something more than their amount of desire and determination available for them with us.

[149] Allāh Shināsī, vol. 3, p. 165: It is from here that the wise men said:

الذاتی لا یُعلَّل.

Things that are inseparable attributes or consequences of something's essence should not be sought for a cause for their existence, and their how and why should not be investigated.

[150] Nahj al-Balāghah (`Abduh), vol. 1, p. 14:

الحمدُ للهِ الّذی لا یبلغُ مِدحتَهُ القائلونَ، و لا یُحصی نَعماءَهُ العادّونَ، و لا یؤدّی حقَّهُ المُجتهدونَ، الّذی لا یُدرکُهُ بُعدُ الهِمَمِ، و لا ینالُهُ غوصُ الفِطَنِ، الّذی لیسَ لِصفتِهِ حدٌّ محدودٌ، و لا نعتٌ موجودٌ، و لا وقتٌ معدودٌ، و لا أجلٌ ممدودٌ. فطرَ الخلائقَ بقدرتِهِ، و نشرَ الرّیاحَ برحمتِهِ، و وتّدَ بالصّخورِ میدانَ أرضِهِ.

Imām Shināsī, vol. 12, p. 346: All adoration, gratitude, and exaltation belong to God. The One whose praise and glorification cannot be fully expressed by the eloquence of orators. The One whose blessings are beyond the reach of any accountant's tally and whose due cannot be fully repaid by any striver's endeavor. His lofty aspirations and keen discernment far exceed the grasp of human understanding, and His profound wisdom and deep insights defy human perception. His attributes transcend all boundaries and definitions, and His qualities transcend human comprehension. His existence defies quantification by time or duration, and His endless expanse is beyond the reach of any finite limit. With His perfect power, He cleaved the chasm of nothingness and, from that void, brought forth the myriad creatures and beings that populate the universe. He infused the world with life-giving winds, a testament to His boundless mercy. He anchored His earth with unyielding mountains, assuring its stability and resilience against the turmoil of existence.

[151] Quran, 58:7:

مَا يَكُونُ مِن نَّجْوَىٰ ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا أَدْنَىٰ مِن ذَٰلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا.

[152] Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, Ghazal 111.

[153] Quran, 40:19.

Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 76, verses from the noble 'Alqamah's prayer.

[154] Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid, vol. 2, p. 849; Al-Iqbāl, vol. 3, p. 336, verses from the noble Kumayl's prayer.

[155] Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid, vol. 2, pp. 844-850; Al-Iqbāl, vol. 3, pp. 331-338, verses from the noble Kumayl's prayer.

[156] Quran, 43:84.

[157] Quran, 55:29. Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 9, p. 351: Every day, God is in a special will and a new matter.

[158] Quran, 50: 16-18. Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 1, p. 87: And We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. When the angels (recorders) record [his deeds], seated on the right hand and on the left. He says no word but that there is a ready observer beside him.

[159] Quran, 58:7: Rūḥ Mujarrad, p. 375: There is no speaking softly and telling secrets among three people unless God is the fourth of them, and there is no among five people unless He is the sixth of them, And it is not lower than this amount and it is not more than this amount except that He is with them wherever they are.

[160]A poem by Mīr Mushtāq Isfahānī. Rūḥ Mujarrad, p. 505:

به عقل نازی حکیم تا کی
به فکرت این ره نمی‌شود طی
به کنه ذاتش خرد برد پیا
گر رسد خس به قعر دریا
چو نیست بینش به دیده دل
رخ ار نماید حقت چه حاصل
که هست یکسان به چشم کوران
چه نقش پنهان چه آشکارا.

O sage of pride, how long will your mind not tread,
This path of truth, your intellect misled?
If straw can pierce the ocean's depths profound,
Will reason's grasp the essence yet astound?
Though Truth unveil herself to prying sight,
If heart's insight eludes, what is the avail, the might?
To blind eyes, hidden and revealed forms align,
A veil between the heart and Truth's design.
Heed, sage, this truth: where knowledge fails to soar,
The heart's embrace reveals the essence pure.

[161] Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, Ghazal, 7.

[162] Al-Iqbāl bi-l-a'māl al-ḥasanat fī mā yu'mal marrah fī l-sanah, vol. 1, p. 140, verses of Iftitāḥ supplication.

[163] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 140, verses of Iftitāḥ supplication.

[164] Dīwān Bābā Ṭahir.

[165] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 140, verses of the Iftitāḥ supplication.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Quran, 43:71.

[169] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 140, verses of Iftitāḥ supplication.

[170] Quran,19:71-72.

[171] For more information about the quality of the passage of all people from Hell, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 8, pp. 22-40.

[172] For more information about the solitude of heavenly people in heaven and hellish people in hell, refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 10, p. 379.

[173] Quran, 19:71-72.

[174] Quran, 19: 66-70.

[175] Quran, 24:37.

[176] Quran, 53:32.

[177] Refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 9, p. 239.

[178] Refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 10, p. 379.

[179] Majma' al-Bayān, vol. 6, p. 812. Also refer to Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 8, pp. 21-27.

[180] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 140, verses of Iftitāḥ supplication.

[181] Ibid, p. 141, verses of Iftitāḥ supplication.

[182] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 140, verses of Iftitāḥ supplication.

[183] For more information about the pledge of allegiance of Abu Bakr and Umar to Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) on the day of Ghadir Khum, refer to Imām Shināsī, vol. 8, p. 94.

[184] For more information about Aslami's fragmented narration and his objection to the caliphate of Abab Bakr, refer to Imām Shināsī, Vol. 8, pp. 111-114.

[185] Mashāriq Anwār al-Yaqīn fī Asrār Amīr al-Mu'minīn, p. 104, with some difference.

186 Jawharah al-maḍī'ah, vol. 2, p. 278.

187 Al-Istī'āb, vol. 3, p. 1098; Usd al-ghābah, vol. 3, p. 588

188 Kashf al-Ghummah, vol. 1, p. 327; Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 38, p. 347; Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, p. 624.
189 Al-Imāma and Al-Siyāsah, vol. 1, p. 30.
190 For more information about Umar's denial of the brotherhood of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), refer to Imām Shināsī, vol. 2, p. 198.
191 Ma'ād Shināsī, vol. 8, p. 172; Anwār-i Malakūt, vol. 2, p. 138.
192 Al-Kāfī, vol. 1, p. 89:
عن أبیعبدالله علیه السّلام، قال: جاءَ حِبرٌ من الأحبارِ إلی أمیرِالمؤمنین علیه السّلام ... فقال: یا أمیرَالمؤمنینَ، أ فنَبیٌّ أنت؟ فقال: "وَیلَک! أنا عبدٌ مِن عبیدِ محمّدٍ صلّی الله علیه و آله و سلّم.

193 For more information, refer to Imām Shināsī, Vol. 1, p. 168.

194 Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt, vol. 1, p. 302:
عن أبیعبدالله علیه السّلام، قال: "علّمَ رسولُ الله صلّی الله علیه و آله و سلّم علیّاً علیه السّلامُ ألفَ بابٍ، فَفُتِحَ له مِن کلِّ بابٍ ألفُ باب.

195 Rawḍat al-muttaqīn fī sharḥ man lā yaḥḍuruh al-faqīh', vol. 13, p. 273:
قال رسولُ الله صلّی الله علیه و آله و سلّم لِعَلیٍّ بن أبیطالب علیه السّلام: "یا علیٌّ، لا یَعرِفُ اللهَ تعالی إلاّ أنا و أنت، و لا یَعرِفُنی إلاّ اللهُ و أنت، و لا یَعرِفُک إلاّ اللهُ و أنا.
The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him: O Ali, no one knows God except me and you, and no one knows me except God and you, and no one knows you except God and me.
196 Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī, p. 181:
[قال] رسول الله صلّی الله علیه و آله و سلّم: " ... لولاک لَمْ یُعرَف حزبُ الله، و بک یُعرَف عدوّ الله.
The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said to Amir al-Mu'minin, peace be upon him: If it were not for you, the party of God would not be known! And through you, the enemy of God is known. (research fellow)

197 Riyāḍ al-Abrār, vol. 3, p. 200, with some differences. Nūr Malakūt Qur'an, vol. 3, p. 392: I campaigned with these pagan people for the principle of accepting the Qur'an, and you campaign for the acceptance of the meaning and purpose of the Qur'an.
198 Nahj al-Balāghah (`Abduh), vol. 2, p. 157.
و لَقَد کُنتُ أتَّبِعُهُ اتِّباعَ الفَصیلِ أثَرَ اُمِّهِ، یَرفَعُ لی فی کُلِّ یَومٍ من أخلاقِهِ عَلَماً، و یأمُرُنی بالاقتِداءِ بِهِ.

199 al-Rawḍat fī faḍā'il Amīr al-Mu'minīn, peace be upon him, Ibn Shādhān Qumi Qumī, p. 132.
200 Quran, 78:1-2.

201 Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib, vol. 2, p. 351: Ibn Nubāta:
نُشِرَت حِلیَةُ قُریشٍ فزادَتهُ ** إلی صَیحَةِ القیامَةِ فَتْلا.

202 Kashf al-Ghummah, vol. 2, p. 310; Imām Shināsī, vol. 1, p. 150: Abu Ṣalt says: 'When His Excellency Imam Rida returned from Ma'mun's gathering to his own home, I said to him, 'I would sacrifice myself for you, you responded so well to Ma'mun!'. Imam said:
ای أبا صلت !
This was a word that flowed on my tongue without thinking about it before,
لَقَد سَمِعتُ أبی یُحَدِّثُ عَن آبائهِ عَن عَلیٍّ عَلَیهِمُ السّلامُ أنَّهُ قالَ رَسولُ اللهِ صلّی الله علیه و آله: یا عَلیُّ، أنتَ قَسیمُ الجنّةِ و النّارِ یَومَ القیامةِ؛ تَقولُ لِلنّارِ: هذا لی و هذا لَکِ!
I heard from my father that he narrated from his fathers that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said about Ali, peace be upon him: O Ali, you are the divider of heaven and hell on the Day of Judgment; Ali will be saying, "this is for me, and that is for you!" to the fire.

203 al-Kāfī, vol. 1, p. 454; Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib, vol. 2, p. 347; Imām Shināsī, vol. 4, p. 72:

Ṣafwānī narrated in the book of Iḥan and Miḥan and Kulaynī in the book of Kāfī that: When Amir al-Mu'minin was martyred, a shaykh came to cry and said: This is the day the relationship of prophethood was interrupted!

جاء شيخ يبكي و هو يقول: "اليوم انقطعت علاقة النبوة! حتى وقف بباب البيت الذی فيه أمير المؤمنين، و أخذ بعضادتى الباب فقال: "رحمك الله! فلقد كنت أول الناس إسلاما، و أخلصهم إيمانا، و أشدهم يقينا، و أخوفهم من الله، و أطوعهم لنبيي الله، و افضلهم مناقب، و اكثرهم سوابق، و اشبههم به خلقا و خلقا و سيماء و فضلا. و كنت اخفضهم صوتا، و أعلاهم طودا، و اقدمهم كلاما، و أصوبهم منطقا، و اشجعهم قلبا، و أحسنهم عملا، و أقواهم يقينا.

حفظت ما ضيعوا، و رعيت ما أهملوا، و شمرت إذ اجتمعوا، و علوت إذ هلعوا، و وقفت إذ شرعوا، و أدركت أوتار ما ظلموا. كنت على الكافرين عذابا واصبا، و للمؤمنين كهفا و حصنا، كنت كالجبل الراسخ لا تحركه العواصف. كنت للطفل كالأب الشفيق، و للأرامل كالبعل العطوف. قسمت بالسوية، و عدلت فى الرعية، و أطفأت النيران، و كسرت الأصنام، و أذللت الأوثان، و عبدت الرحمن." فى كلام له كثير.

فالتفتوا فلم يروا أحدا، فسئل الحسن عليه السلام: من كان الرجل؟ قال: "الخضر عليه السلام.

Today the chains of prophecy were broken! The shaykh stood in a room where His Highness had let the bird of his soul fly and with both his hands, he grabbed the sides of the door and said: God bless you! Indeed, you were the first person to convert to Islam, and you were the most sincere among them in terms of faith. Your certainty was the strongest of all and your fear of God was greater than all. Your obedience to God's Messenger was greater than all, and your virtues were the highest of all. Your records were more than all, and your resemblance to the Messenger of God in terms of natural powers and spiritual ethics, and terms of grace and honor was more than all. You were the calmest of all, and in terms of your endurance and stability, you were the highest and noblest of all. Your words and speech were the most acceptable, and your reasoning was the most correct, and your heart was the bravest of all, and your actions were the best of all, and your certainty was the strongest of all.

You preserved what they squandered, and you observed what they neglected. You girded your heart when they gathered together, and you held your soul high when they were greedy. You stopped when they were heretics. and you raised against the atrocities they committed.

O Ali! You were a severe and continuous punishment for the disbelievers and a refuge, shelter, and sanctuary for the believers. You were like a vast and stable mountain in that solid winds, false opinions, and hard storms of opposing desires and thoughts did not cause any slight movement in you. Towards children, you were like a kind father, and to widows, like a kind husband. You divided the wealth equally and treated the subjects and masses of people with justice. You extinguished the fires of disbelief, polytheism, oppression, violence, usurpation, encroachment on rights. You smashed the three external and internal idols, stood up, and acted as a servant of God.

And he spoke many such words and expressed the great qualities of that Imam, and suddenly he disappeared. That old man was Khidr, the Prophet (peace be upon him).

[204] Safinah al-Biḥār, vol. 6, p. 184; Anwār Malakūt, vol. 2, p. 248:

روى أن عدى بن حاتم دخل على معاوية بن أبىسفيان؛ فقال: يا عدى! أين الطرفات؟ (يعنى: بنيه طريفا و طارفا و طرفة.) قال: قتلوا يوم صفين بين يدى على بن أبىطالب عليه السلام. فقال: ما أنصفك ابن أبىطالب إذ قدم بنيك و أخر بنيه! قال: بل ما أنصفت عليا إذ قتل و بقيت!

دور از حريم كوى تو شرمنده ماندهام ** شرمنده ماندهام كه چرا زنده ماندهام.

قال: * صف لى عليا! فقال: إن رأيت أن تعفينى! قال: لا أعفيك!

قال: كان والله بعيد المدى، شديد القوى، يقول عدلا و يحكم فصلا، يتفجر الحكمة من جوانبه و العلم من نواحيه، يستوحش من الدنيا و زهرتها، و يستأنس بالليل و وحشته. و كان والله غزير الدمعة، طويل الفكرة. يحاسب نفسه إذا خلا، و يقلب كفيه على ما مضى؛ يعجبه من اللباس القصير و من المعاش الخشن. و كان فينا كأحدنا، يجيبنا إذا سألناه و يدنينا إذا أتيناه؛ و نحن مع تقريبه لنا و قربه منا، لا نكلمه لهيبته، و لا نرفع أعيننا إليه لعظمته. فإن تبسم فعن اللؤلؤ المنظوم. يعظم أهل الدين، و يتحبب إلى المساكين، لا يخاف القوى ظلمه، و لا ييأس الضعيف من عدله. فأقسم لقد رأيته ليلة و قد مثل فى محرابه و أرخى الليل سرباله و غارت نجومه، و دموعه تتحادر على لحيته و هو يتململ تململ السليم و يبكى بكاء الحزين، فكأنى الآن أسمعه و هو يقول: "يا دنيا! إلى تعرضت أم إلى أقبلت؟ غرى غيرى! لا حان حينك؛ قد طلقتك ثلاثا، لا رجعة لى فيك! فعيشك حقير و خطرك يسير. آه من قلة الزاد و بعد السفر و قلة الأنيس.

قالَ: فَوَكَفَتْ عَيْنا مُعاوِيَةَ و جَعَلَ يُنَشِّفُهُما بِكُمِّهِ، ثُمَّ قالَ: يَرحَمُ اللهُ أبا الحَسَنِ! كانَ كَذَلِكَ! فَكَيفَ صَبرُكَ عَنهُ؟! قالَ: كَصَبرِ مَن ذُبِحَ وَلَدُها في حِجرِها، لا تَرقَى دَمعَتُها و لا تَسكُنُ عَبرَتُها. قالَ: كَيفَ ذِكرُكَ لَهُ؟ قالَ: و هَل يَترُكُني الدَّهرُ أن أنساهُ؟

It has been narrated that ‘Adī bin Ḥātim went to Mu'awiya. Mu'awiya said: O ‘Adī, where are the parties (That is, ‘Adī 's three children: Ṭarif, Ṭārif, and Ṭarafa.) ‘Adī replied: They were martyred in the battle of Ṣiffin in the footsteps of Ali bin Abi Talib (peace be upon him). Mu'awiya said: Ali did not treat you fairly because he sent your children forward and kept his children behind the army! ‘Adī said: I did not do justice to Ali because he was martyred, and I am still alive! Mu'awiya said: Tell me Ali's qualities. ‘Adī said: If possible, excuse me. Mu'awiya said: I will not. ‘Adī said: I swear to God! He had a very unlikely horizon, an unattainable position, and a firm and secure will (he moved in the path of truth with strength and intensity); he spoke to justice, and in the position of ruling and judging, he meant the truth. Wisdom emanated from his whole being, and knowledge flowed from all his works. He avoided the world and its decorations and loved the night and its darkness. Tears often flowed from his eyes, and he was constantly thinking and meditating. When he was alone, he condemned his ego, thought about his actions, and shook his hands in remorse over his past. He liked short clothes and rough food. He was one of us, and If we invited him to our house, he would accept, and when we went to him, he would bring us close to him. He had such awe and glory between us that we could not talk to him, and we did not have the strength to look at him because of his greatness and dignity. When he spoke, his white teeth sparkled like shining pearls. He respected religion and made the poor people his favor and love. A strong person was safe from his cruelty, and a weak person was not disappointed by his justice.

Swear to God! One night, I saw him at the altar of his worship, busy with secrets and needs. The darkness of the night was everywhere, and the stars were hidden. Tears were flowing from his eyes while he curled up like a snake-bitten and wept like a bereaved person as if now I hear his voice saying: O world! Have you become the path of my life, or have you turned to me? Leave me and betray someone else! The time for you to reach me has not yet come. Depart, I have dissolved our covenant three times! A woman who thrice divorced cannot be reclaimed. There will be no turning back! O world, how low and worthless is life with you, and how easy is your danger?_Ah, from the scarcity of provisions, the length of the journey, and the scarcity of companions.

At this time, Mu'awiya's tears started to flow, and he was wiping them with his sleeve. Then he said: May God have mercy on Aba al-Hassan that it was like this! O ‘Adī, How can you bear the loss of someone so dear? He said: Like a person whose child has been beheaded in his lap, while his tears are endless! Mu'awiya said: How do you remember him? He said: Will time allow me to forget him?

[205] Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī asrār Amīr al-Mu'minīn, p. 288.

ما رَواه المُفَضَّلُ بنُ عُمَرَ، قالَ: قُلتُ لأبيعَبدِاللهِ عليه السَّلام: إذا كانَ عَليٌّ عليه السَّلام يُدخِلُ الجَنَّةَ مُحِبَّهُ و النّارَ عَدوَّهُ، فَأينَ مالِكٌ و رِضوانُ إذاً؟

فَقالَ: "يا مُفَضَّلُ! أ لَيسَ الخَلائِقُ كُلُّهُم يَومَ القِيامَةِ بِأمرِ مُحَمَّدٍ؟!" قُلتُ: بَلَى! قالَ: "فَعَلِيٌّ عليه السَّلام يَومَ القِيامَةِ قَسيمُ الجَنَّةِ و النّارِ بِأمرِ مُحَمَّدٍ، و مالِكٌ و رِضوانُ أمرُهُما إلَيهِ! خُذها يا مُفَضَّلُ؛ فَإنَّها مِن مَكنونِ العِلمِ و مَخزونِه.

Mufaḍal bin ‘Umar narrated that I said to Ḥaḍrat Sadiq (peace be upon him): If Ali (peace be upon him) takes his lover into heaven and his enemy into hell, then where Malik (the guardian angel of hell) and Rizwan (the angel of heaven's reservoir)) are? Ḥaḍrat said: "O Mufaḍal! Are not all creations on the Day of Resurrection under the command of Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him and his family? I said: Yes! The Prophet said: So, on the Day of Resurrection, Ali (peace be upon him) will be the one who divides heaven and hell by the command of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, and the command of Malik and Rizwan will also be in his hands. O Mufaḍal, keep this matter secret, as it is hidden from knowledge!

[206] Al-Kāfi, vol. 1, p. 36, with some differences.

[207] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 140, verses from the noble Iftitāḥ supplication.

[208] Quran, 33:33.

[209] Dalā'il al-Imāma p. 148.

[210] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 140, verses from the noble Iftitāḥ supplication.

[211] Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 37, p. 68:

و مِنَ الجَمعِ بَينَ الصِّحاحِ السِّتَّةِ مِن سُنَنِ أبي‌داوُدَ بِإسنادِهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم، قالَ: إنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم سارَّ فاطِمَةَ و قالَ لَها: أ لا تَرضَينَ أن تَكوني سَيِّدَةَ نِساءِ العالَمينَ أو سَيِّدَةَ نِساءِ هٰذِهِ الأُمَّةِ؟!

فَقالَت: فَأينَ مَريَمُ بِنتُ عِمرانَ و آسيَةُ امرَأةُ فِرعَونَ؟

فَقالَ: مَريَمُ سَيِّدَةُ نِساءِ عالَمِها و آسيَةُ سَيِّدَةُ نِساءِ عالَمِها.

[212] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 141, verses from the noble Iftitāḥ supplication.

[213] Al-Iḥtijāj, Ṭabarsī, vol. 2, p. 446. He narrates a commentary in which Imam Jawad (peace be upon him) answers the questions of Yahya Ibn Akhtam about Sunni traditions. Among them, he says about this fake narration: .

قالَ يَحيَى: و قَد رُوِيَ أيضًا أنَّهُما سَيِّدا كُهولِ أهلِ الجَنَّةِ؛ فَما تَقولُ فيهِ؟ فَقالَ عليه السّلام: "و هذا الخَبَرُ مُحالٌ أيضًا؛ لأنَّ أهلَ الجَنَّةِ كُلَّهُم يَكونون شُبّانًا و لا يَكونُ فيهِم كَهلٌ، و هذا الخَبَرُ وَضَعَهُ بَنو أُمَيَّةَ لِمُضادَّةِ الخَبَرِ الَّذي قالَهُ رَسولُ اللهِ صلّى الله عليه و آله و سلّم في الحَسَنِ و الحُسَينِ عليهما السّلام بِأنَّهُما سَيِّدا شَبابِ أهلِ الجَنَّةِ.

[214] Kashf al-Ghummah, vol. 1, p. 9:

و قالَ لِعجوزٍ: الجَنَّةُ لا تَدخُلُها العُجُزُ! فَبَكَت. فَقال: إنَّهُنَّ يَعُدنَ أبكارًا.

[215] Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib, vol. 1, p. 148.

[216] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 140, verses from the noble Iftitāḥ supplication.

[217] Al-Najm al-thāqib, vol. 1, chapter 2, pp. 177-85.

[218] verses from the noble Iftitāḥ supplication.

[219] Baṣā'ir ad-Darajāt, vol. 1, p. 302.

[220] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 141, verses from the noble Iftitāḥ supplication.

[221] Ibid.

[222] Quran, 69:17.

[223] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 140, verses from the noble Iftitāḥ supplication.

[224] Ibid, vol. 1, p. 141, verses from the noble Iftitāḥ supplication.

[225] Translation from Risālah Nikāhīyah, p. 56.

[226] Translation from Waẓīfah Fard musalmān Dar 'Iḥyā Ḥukūmat Islām, p. 35.

[227] Al-Iqbāl, vol. 1, p. 143, verses from the noble Iftitāḥ supplication.